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CANTERBURY TALES.

VOLUME THE FIFTH,

BY HARRIET LEE.

"More last Words."

SPECTATOR.

LONDON:

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CANTERBURY TALES

VOLUME THE FIFTH

BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY J. H. B. HARRIS

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LONDON

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1802

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CANTERBURY TALES.

Youth of the quick uncheated fight,
Thy walks, Observance, most delight.

COLLINS.

“**D**ID you please to look for a lodging, Sir?” said a respectable woman, to an elderly gentleman, whom she had observed loitering for some time in the neighbourhood of the Esplanade at Weymouth.

“What *there*, do you mean?” replied the stranger drily, and pointing to the sea, on which, indeed, he had been most intently gazing at the moment she addressed him.

“ I beg pardon, Sir,” rejoined the first speaker, somewhat out of countenance at what she conceived to be a rebuke; “ but as the day is so *uncommon* hot, and you seem to be a stranger, it struck me”—

“ That one might be perfectly cool in such a spot as that?—truly many a brave fellow has been cool enough there.”

“ To be sure they have, Sir: but it is not the custom to bathe at this hour of the day.”

“ Bathe, my good woman!—bathe!—Why, would any body in their senses think of bathing in such a sea as that?”

Confounded at this question, the good woman, as he took the liberty of calling her, first looked earnestly at the sea, and then as earnestly on her new acquaintance:

there

there was nothing in his countenance that appeared like banter: nor in truth any thing in either prospect that struck her to be at all remarkable.

“Don’t you perceive,” added he, with evident surprise, “how tremendously rough the water is?” “Rough! dear heart, Sir!” —and half suppressing a smile, she again looked towards the sea. The tide came rolling in with a full wave, the force of which was increased, as well by the season of the year, as by a most refreshing breeze: while the sun played over a vast expanse of green, dazzling the eye with its lustre, and brightening the spray, which dashed high as it approached the shore: the whole scene conveying to those that were accustomed to sea-views the most lively sensation of spirit and gaiety.

“ Rough, Sir, did you say ?” again exclaimed the last speaker, with fresh surprise once more surveying the prospect.

“ What a terrible situation ! That boat will certainly be lost ! ” —

“ Bless you, Sir ! that boat’s only a pleasuring. I know the gentry in it extremely well.”

“ Their pleasure will then be very short, for I am convinced that we shall have a dreadful storm as soon as the sun goes in.”

This last proof of nautical judgment settled the opinion of the good woman with regard to the person who uttered it ; and having reconnoitred him from head to foot with even, if possible, more accuracy than she had done before her first salutation,

lutation, she made up her mind, that he was no other than a *Lunnener*, and had never seen salt water till then : a conclusion more charitable than she had at first been inclined to draw ; inasmuch as it left him the possession of his right senses, however small the purposes which they appeared to answer.

One of those light showers that so often sweep across the sky at the rising of the tide, and give to the whole view indescribable variety and beauty, now began to “ shed prelusive drops ” from a dark cloud, little larger in its apparent dimensions than a pocket-handkerchief ; when the stranger, hastily unfurling a prodigious umbrella, which, in defiance of the heat he had carried under his arm, goodnaturedly called to his companion to take shelter beneath its circumference ; and appealing very forcibly to the truth of his own predictions with

regard to the approaching *tempest*, hinted to her, that the opportunity was a favourable one for looking at the lodgings which she was disposed to recommend to him.

“Would the family like a house, or only a set of apartments, Sir?” said the female speaker, in the most insinuating tone, as, to the great annoyance of other walkers, they pressed forward under their formidable umbrella.

“I have no family,” replied the gentleman laconically. The countenance of his companion fell: and indeed, simple as the sentence was, it conveyed a great deal: for, instead of the prospect in which she had indulged her imagination, of letting a large expensive house, “with all appurtenance and means to boot,” the view suddenly contracted to a single gentleman, a parlour,

floor, and all the &c. of minute economy attendant upon such establishments, where youth and carelessness have no share in making out the account. A long observation upon life, and certain studies peculiar to her employment, though they had not rendered Mrs. Adams a philosopher or a physiognomist, had bestowed a portion of knowledge perhaps upon the whole less fallible than theirs; for while they, with infinite labour and research, endeavour to describe man such as God originally made him, or as his passions cause him to make himself, she, with more summary decision, judged him simply by his habits; whether they were of person or of mind: in other words, she saw him such as his taylor makes the one, and his employments the other: inferring, that both together made the man. Nor was she often deceived: half the world have no genuine characteristics left, and are to be tried by some

standard not very different from that employed by Mrs. Adams. It was by such kind of calculation that the good lady had concluded her companion to be either the butler or steward of some family of fashion, and made her advances accordingly. In this conjecture she now began to suspect that she had been wrong: he might be rich, however: nothing in his exterior announced the contrary: and though unprovided with a wife and family, either of his own or other people's, the chances were evidently in favour of his finding one, or possibly both, during his stay at Weymouth, if he were so disposed, and made a proper appearance. With all due attention, therefore, to his future comfort, she persisted in shewing him this house, and that house: assured him that many single gentlemen chose to be handsomely accommodated, in order that they might be able to give entertainments to the ladies;

ladies ; and threw in occasional descriptions of balls, and pretty girls, whose mothers did not disapprove of their forming such parties when properly countenanced. Her hearer listened meantime with some complacency ; enquired much, answered little, and finally almost tired the patience of his would-be landlady, by an irresolution that seemed to have no end. “ That house was too large : those apartments were too small : the view on one side was confined ; and on the other, it is so melancholy,” said he, “ looking, as it does, only on the sea.”

“ That’s an odd fault to find at a watering-place, Sir,” said Mrs. Adams, whose complaisance began insensibly to diminish, “ My last lodger was not of your mind. Heaven help him, poor gentleman ! to think of the hours that he used to spend in rambling by himself on the sands ! you should

should contemplate the moon, Sir, as he did, when she rises from the very bosom, as I may say, of the bay, and throws a long stream of light down to your very door, before you call the apartments melancholy." Mrs. Adams had now touched a theme, though it was not that of the moon, which by an odd chance excited the curiosity of her hearer: she was pleased to observe that he was pleased, and conversation began once more to flourish.

"I can't say as to his fortune, Sir," said Mrs. Adams, in answer to a question on the subject; "but he was a gentleman, I am sure: and while he was in my house he paid like a gentleman: but his great delight was the moon. "Mrs. Adams," says he to me one night when I went to settle a little cash account with him, and found him sitting without candles in the room, "it is impossible to wish for any
other

other light than from that beautiful planet: do you observe the single bright star that seems to follow her track through the heavens? Methinks they resemble a mother and her child." On saying this, he did so sigh, Sir!"——

"And pray what became of this gentleman when he left Weymouth?" said her hearer, impatiently, and indeed somewhat fatigued with the episode of the moon.

"I can't say that I know whether he *has* left it, Sir," returned Mrs. Adams. "The poor gentleman, I believe, rather fell into misfortunes: and my lodgings did not suit him any longer, as you may suppose: indeed, they can't be expected to suit those that have not wherewithal to pay handsomely: so we parted mighty good friends"——Mrs. Adams made a sudden, but very marked pause; for she perceived

ceived that her hearer had picked up a slip of writing-paper from the floor, on which he was looking with an air of curiosity that instantly excited hers. The paper, however, for he put it into her hands a few moments afterwards, contained nothing interesting. It seemed to be only a miscellaneous catalogue of books, which the writer either possessed, or wished to possess: but the hand-writing conveyed to him who saw it, more than Mrs. Adams could possibly guess, and more, in fact, than he expected to learn; for it convinced him that he was in the right track, and that her *ci-devant* lodger was no other than the man in search of whom he had travelled to Weymouth. This was, in the language of the world, a lucky hit: for, by a singular chance, it happened that their personal meeting would have been of no avail: the hand-writing being the only particular by which the seeker could with
any

any certainty have recognized the person fought : so long was it since they had seen each other.

The stranger now returned to his inn, and Mrs. Adams to her own apartment and her bit of mutton : convinced, to use her own language, " that she had taken all this trouble for some quizzzy old batchelor, who intended to establish himself in a two pair of stairs room."

The good lady was not altogether deceived. Mr. Atkinson was certainly a batchelor : his face shewed that he was not young ; and his coat intimated him to be a quiz. But under this face and coat lay a store of good sense, integrity, and kindness of heart, somewhat disfigured by whimsical peculiarities of manner indeed, but ever active, as at that moment, in the cause of misfortune. He had been ori-

ginally designed for the law, and brought up, though in a very humble line, accordingly. Circumstances rendered him afterwards the agent, and indeed fac-totum to a family of very considerable opulence: where, after spending his youth in dutiful service, and his mature life in domestic, though respectful intercourse; after directing the juvenile sports of several fine lads, the beloved sons of his benefactor, and sharing in all those hopes which their promising outset announced; he had had the pain of beholding this bright prospect clouded by storms the most unforeseen:

———“ The houses, lands,

“ And once fair-spreading family dissolved,”

or, after a succession of different events, centred in an heir of whose existence he could not assure himself, except by such steps as necessity and long-rooted attachment now induced him to take.

The

The chace proved tedious. For it was not in palaces, nor in assemblies; neither among the gay nor the happy, that Mr. Atkinson could hope to find this heir of five thousand a year. He was to be looked for in the habitations of indigence and obscurity: where inquiry was baffled by the apprehensions of him who alone could satisfy it; and the person sought was ever flying from the benignant friend that was seeking him. Under these circumstances, all the sufferings of poverty, and all the evils of indiscretion, had alternately been exposed to view: and Mr. Atkinson had seen more of man, erring, inconsistent, prodigal, yet miserable and much-enduring man, within the last two months, than the whole tenor of his life, till that period, had ever displayed to him. Mrs. Adams, however, had not been quite wrong in her conjecture: amongst all the sights that had presented themselves, Atkinson

fon

son had *not* seen the sea: nor in truth any larger body of water than that which his benefactor's grounds afforded; or the small river which ran through his own native town. He had indeed peeped at the Thames, during the time which necessity obliged him to employ in visiting London; but not the majestic Thames that bears navies on her bosom, or conveys to an overgrown metropolis the luxuries of two opposite hemispheres; nor that more beautiful Thames which flows between the consecrated banks of Twickenham and Richmond, ever dear to poetical imaginations: No!—willing to satisfy his curiosity with two superb views at once, and to make the most of the little time he could spare, it was at Billingsgate, during the intervals of admiration excited by that famous market, that he had taken his chief survey of the no less famous river adjoining. What wonder then that beholding
the

the vast bosom of the ocean, he shuddered at the temerity of people who venture upon it in boats that seemed to him only larger than cockle-shells! or that those bright waves, whose lightly-silvered points convey to some constitutions the gayest and most exhilarating feelings, appeared to his alarmed imagination hardly less than mountainous billows! Taste he had none: reading he had little: of the world he knew nothing. To do all the good he could in it, partake a temperate meal with a temperate friend, keep his heart and his coat equally unsoiled; tuck his umbrella under his arm, and shelter his eyes with a beaver of most primitive shape and dimensions, was with him the summum bonum of life. Such was Mr. Abraham Atkinson.

Now Mr. Abraham Atkinson had a female counterpart on this earthly globe, although he did not yet know it; by name

Mrs. Dixon : an obscure personage, whose chief business was, like Mrs. Adams, to let ready-furnished apartments. Mrs. Dixon however resembled her compeer in no one thing except that by which she lived. For, whereas the latter was tall, thin, had a sharp eye, a shrewd mind, and a most accommodating cast of countenance, in which nothing of the original character could be discerned but its leading feature—self-interest ; Mrs. Dixon, on the contrary, was fat, good-humoured, liberal, credulous, and so willing to do what was kind by everybody, that there was only one person in the whole circle of the neighbourhood whom she neglected. But that one never complained ; never knew what it was to be discontented ; buffeted ill-fortune with a magnanimity that would have immortalized her, had it been the gift of intellect and not the mere result of a happy temperament ; enjoyed all the little good that

fell to her lot, and never repined though Benjamin's portion went to those who less deserved it. In a word, this neglected individual was Mrs. Dixon herself; but the error which she was not conscious of, she never strove to amend: and thus remained stationary till forty; in the self-same town, street, house, and employment, in which she had found herself at five-and-twenty.

It happened that these counterparts, as is frequently the case with the counterparts of this world, were far from suspecting each other to be such: and it was the exactness of the resemblance that prevented their seeing it: for both, without a spark of what is decidedly to be called vanity, had a certain habitual blindness to their own exterior, which did not extend one degree further; so that while Mrs. Dixon secretly congratulated herself that she was not such a prim, upright, particular-look-

ing figure as Mr. Atkinson, the gentleman, on the contrary, thought himself fortunate in having past the meridian of life without attaining the plump insignificance of Mrs. Dixon. As yet, however, these two good creatures were unknown to each other: but their guardian angels, if guardian angels are ever allowed to persons not handsome, and past five-and-twenty, or rather the guardian angels of those they were to serve, were at work to bring them together; and this was facilitated by means of a terrestrial deputy, who certainly had nothing of the angelic either in her form or her mind: it was Mrs. Adams.

A conversation between this lady and Mr. Atkinson, not necessary to be detailed at length, as it is probable enough of it has already been set down, had, before they parted, pretty nearly convinced the latter that the gentleman whom he sought, after
quitting

quitting her house from not having, as she elegantly phrased it, "wherewithal to pay," had certainly taken up his abode in the neighbourhood with some person less rigid in that particular; and a very little address had brought out Mrs. Dixon's name: it was immediately subsequent to this discovery that Atkinson returned to the Red Lion and a solitary dinner; where, after drinking his usual small allowance of port, he fell into a fit of meditation, which terminated, as meditations after dinner rather frequently do, in a gentle nap. On awaking he found the heat of the day considerably abated: the sea, which most impertinently seemed to lie in his way whichever road he took, was sunk into profound tranquillity, and the soft murmur of an ebbing tide alone rendered it distinguishable to the ear. The sun was setting behind the town, which already began to cast its shade over

the beach and nearer view ; while the barren hills of Portland, with the small vessels sheltered beneath, still lying under the reflection of the distant brightness, presented an amusing spectacle to the eye,

As Mrs. Dixon's window held out an invitation that made it no intrusion to knock at her door, the business of introduction was accomplished without any difficulty : yet, by an ill-luck perhaps to be accounted for in the want of those exterior graces of which nature had not been liberal to either party, these two worthy people did not immediately make the favourable impression on each other which they were mutually entitled to do. Mr. Atkinson had taken it into his head that some portion of ingenuity would be necessary in order to effect the discovery he wished : his exordium therefore was by no means prepossessing, for the simple reason,

reason, that it was studied: trusting to nature the chances had been fifty to one in his favour, but he was a mere bungler at finesse; and the consequence of his attempting it was, that Mrs. Dixon, struck with the quaintness and peculiarity of his manner, began to exercise her own sagacity; and, by an effect of that secret sympathy of character already described, became in her turn no less ingeniously mysterious than her visitor; so that the chief purport of the visit, which was to learn some tidings of her last lodger, was as little in a way to be accomplished as though they had never met. But if the negotiation did not promise to be very successful as to its principal aim, there were some subordinate considerations not totally to be neglected by either party. Mrs. Dixon's apartments had been empty for a considerable time past: the stranger was evidently not provided with any: his

appearance was quiet; respectable: denoting ease, if not affluence; and, but for some suspicious circumstances attending his supposed employment, rendered him precisely the sort of person she would have approved as an inmate. Atkinson, meantime, was not without his prudential observations; and they were exactly in character with the tone of his mind. In the landlady he saw, indeed, very little to like, but a great deal in the house: its neat window-curtains, pretty-patterned sofa, and unsoiled carpet, with a well-washed bed lately fitted up, and a snug chamber that did *not* look towards the sea, an element to which he had taken a most decided aversion, possessed irresistible attraction. The intimations he had previously received, his recent discovery, and a confused suspicion, which, in spite of Mrs. Dixon's equivocal answers, he could not help cherishing, that he should learn
from

from her something more as to the object of his journey, than she at that juncture chose to impart, made her house, of all in Weymouth, appear most desirable as a residence; and, not being among those easy or isolated mortals who find themselves most at home in an inn, he was as impatient as the tranquillity of his nature allowed him to be, to quit that in which he was stationed.

The agreement was soon made. The tabby cat was licensed to hold her place; hot rolls for breakfast, a comfortable dinner, never later than three o'clock, and a dish of tea when it suited him to take it, were the preliminary articles: after which the two counterparts prepared themselves on both sides to dismiss from their recollection whatever had not pleased them on either, and to make their little home, what

home ought always to be, a scene of tranquil enjoyment.

"You are a great reader of the Bible, I see, Mrs. Dixon," said her guest, as he entered her parlour from his walk on the following evening, and found her still poring over a large book, on which he had left her engaged two hours before.

"Heaven forbid that I should not be so, Sir," said she, taking off her spectacles, and laying them on the table, "but this, to my shame be it spoken, is not the Bible. You, perhaps, never saw so curious a book as this, Sir; for, thick as it seems, it is nothing all through but writing: and, to be sure, the beautifulest hand one shall see." Atkinson looked over her shoulder as she spoke, and recognised it well.

"The

"The hand-writing of your lodger," said he, dissembling his surprise.

"My lodger as *was*, Sir."

"And where is he now? I may have particular reasons for asking."

"And I might have particular reasons for not telling, Sir, even if I knew: but, wherever he is, he is a sweet young gentleman."

"Is he so very young then?"

"Why, not so *very* young neither: a matter of three or four-and-twenty."

"Not so much as that," muttered Atkinson to himself. "What person of a man?"

"Very

"Very handsome, if he was not so pale."

"He was not pale when I knew him," again murmured Atkinson, shaking his head: there are tones and gestures liable to misinterpretation; Mrs. Dixon, who could only catch those, without being able to understand the accompanying words, did certainly, on this occasion, interpret very erroneously.

"That person must have a heart of iron," she continued, with no small indignation, "who could think of injuring such a charming gentleman."

"But if this gentleman, by some unfortunate prejudice, injures himself, Mrs. Dixon."

"Why,

"Why, then let him punish himself! you and I need have nothing more to do with him."

"Yet you value his book?"

"That I do, as I would my life! and read it too whenever I can steal the opportunity. 'Tis the history of my house."

"That must be a curious history indeed," said Atkinson, relaxing his features to a smile.

"So I said, Sir," returned Mrs. Dixon, smiling in her turn. "The history of a lodging-house!" says I.—"Aye, Mrs. Dixon," says he, "do you not believe that the history of a lodging-house would afford many an interesting tale? I could tell you one, perhaps"—and there he stopt Sir. "Let me see," he added, after a pause;

pause; "you have four sets of apartments for instance: the kitchen, the parlour, the drawing-room, the attic:—I think we may call it five, if we add the *poetical* floor: and that is privileged time immemorial: any flight of imagination will do for it." I could not guess what floor he meant, Sir, but it seems it was the garret.

"Well," continued he, "for the attic I think I need not go farther than myself. Then for the drawing-room——"

"Which Mr. Seymour and his family have just quitted, you know, Sir."

"Mr. Seymour's family!" repeated he sighing: he was a great fighter, Sir; and then there was a long pause between us. "We may pass that floor securely, Mrs. Dixon—I know too much of what relates to that; and a little—a very little imagination

gination will supply the rest. For the parlours I must, of course, refer myself to you."

" Me, Sir! Heaven help us! I have no story belonging to me. Pray skip me over, I desire. I am as it were a mere nobody—between the highest and the lowest."

" Right; the middle rank: too humble for the vices of luxury, too well-taught for those of grossness. That is indeed the rank of which there is little to say on earth, though it has much to expect in Heaven. Now to descend to an humbler scene—the kitchen."——

" I think I may venture to defy you there," said I.

" To convict you of being in the wrong, I need only repeat a story
which

which you have yourself related to me, though by snatches indeed, twenty times."

"Dear Sir, all the stories I ever related in my whole life would not make a book."

"Wrong again there to a certainty," said he, archly: for when he was not so melancholy, Sir, he could be arch:—and on those occasions he had such a taking smile!—"What think you, for instance," continued he, "of the history of your former servant?"—

"Not old Mary, to be sure!"

"She was not always old!"—

"No truly—nor always crazed—nay, for the matter of that, she is not so old now!—but, poor thing, she has had
enough

enough to craze her!"—"As you're alive, Sir, while we were speaking the words, who should put her head in at the parlour window but Mary herself.—You saw her the other day as you and I walked down street together." Atkinson nodded assent. "A melancholy looking body!"—Atkinson nodded again. "Well, as I was saying, in she puts her head. I declare she made me start downright."

"Good day, Mary," said I, trying to recover myself.

"They will fail to-morrow," returned she, in her hurrying way, and without noticing my salutation.

"Who will fail?"

"Why, the Captain and the Admiral. The King will go on board his frigate, and

Bob will be there.—The sun will shine *so* brightly!—and the Princesses have promised to lend me fine clothes, that I may see the fight.”

“ Alas, poor Mary !” said the sweet gentleman, as he saw her go smiling away ; “ if this is to be mad, why should men like me wish to keep their senses !”—— I was quite down-cast to hear him make this sorrowful reflection. So I thought I’d talk to him a bit about his book ; for, between ourselves, Sir, I rather believed he was in earnest to write it. He had no other amusement, and so he would write, write, write, all day. Mostly verses indeed ; and I knew that he had touched up some pretty melancholy love-songs and sonneteerings.

“ Well, Sir,” says I, “ you have travelled on nearly to the end of your journey.”

“ You

“ You think then that poor Mary will do,” replied he, half musing, half smiling.

“ Bless me, No ! Who would dream of writing such an old story as that ?”

“ I will.”

“ Dear Sir, there are a hundred such in the world. Take my word for it, it will pass for a mere Canterbury Tale.”

“ With all my heart ! I have not the least objection——proving old stories are proverbially called Canterbury tales, and therefore, mine claim that title. I shall not attempt to decorate the one in question, Mrs. Dixon : it shall remain your own story told, as nearly as I can recollect, in your own words,”——“ and to be sure so it is, Sir ! and that, no doubt, makes me so fond of reading it.—Only look at the line

he has written at top."——Whether Mr. Atkinson took the trouble to read all that followed that line, for a part he certainly did, may be problematical: but he turned immediately to the first leaf of the book, and saw written in large, but familiar characters,

THE LANDLADY'S TALE.

THE
LANDLADY'S TALE.

“ The Rich disdain her :—Nay the Poor disdain.

“ CRABBE.”

MARY LAWSON, Sir, however crazed and altered you now see her, was, within my memory, one of the best-looking girls in Weymouth. Not but there were different opinions concerning her. Many of our lodgers used to say, that she would be pretty enough if she would open her eyes : but to my thinking there was something soft and sorrowful in them when half

closed, as they generally were, that was quite out of the common way. Mary was born in a village upon the banks of the Dee, not very far from the neighbourhood of Wrexham. Her father, though he held only a small farm, lived in a very reputable way, and Mary's education was therefore not neglected. She could read and write; and to be sure it is not saying any great things to add, that she had a better head than mine ever was for accounts; and as to her needle, she was a perfect mistress of it. Many a beautiful piece of patchwork have we contrived together! but all that will come in its place.

At fourteen Mary lost her mother; nor was that the greatest of her misfortunes: for her father soon married again, and as his second wife was a careless idling sort of body, the charge of a young family, which quickly came on, was left almost entirely

entirely to his eldest daughter. "I did not at that time love children," said Mary afterwards to me. "I thought them all noisy and troublesome alike; and often wondered at my mother-in-law, who, although she did no one useful thing for them, cried them up as patterns of perfection. Oh Mrs. Dixon, who could have persuaded me, young and giddy as I then was, that to sit by the cradle of a sick baby, to listen to its little moans, and to give it the bread that I wanted myself, would be a more precious employment to me than all the pleasures of the whole world besides! But I then thought there were a great many people and things to love in the world; and perhaps to fine folks there may be: *my* lot was different; but my sins began with children, and so did my punishment."

This was only the poor girl's talk, Sir, for I could never gather that she did any harm at that time, only, I suppose, was a little heedless, like those of her age. However her mother-in-law and she did not agree; and it would have been wonderful if they had, considering the way that things were managed. So the father bethought himself of an expedient that pleased both parties, though Mary acknowledged to me that she was best pleased of the two. An aunt of hers was settled at Bristol in the haberdashery line. Her shop drove no mighty trade; but she was an infirm single woman, and therefore not unwilling to take her niece in, as an assistant. Mary was accordingly fitted out with two new gowns, great doings, as she said, for those days, and I know not how many different ribbons; which to be sure was a very idle expence, considering where she

she was going. However they were mostly tokens of good-will, presented by the neighbours, and she kept them as such till a long long time after ; for she had a tender heart, as was proved to her sorrow.

Well, Sir, those who live in large towns, such as Weymouth, and see a great deal of the world, as you and I have done, can have no guess at Mary's surprise when she arrived at Bristol. For a short time she thought it the finest and happiest place in the whole globe. Her aunt was not unkind to her ; she herself was naturally of a gay and cheerful character, and all the new scenes around made her gayer still. But by-and-by this novelty began to fade a little ; and after being familiar with busy streets, and close-packed houses, she could not help calling to mind the green lanes and clear river of her native place. Her
greatest

greatest delight was to walk on a fine Sunday to a village not far distant called Clifton, and to sit on the brow of the rocks. A large river runs there, Sir, I understand; but whether it be the Thames or not, is more than I can tell you.

These walks, however, proved very unlucky for Mary. A regiment of Dragoons was at that time quartered at Bristol, and some of the officers, (which to be sure proves their want of taste,) were fonder of being at Clifton than in that great city. One of these took particular notice of Mary: there are strawberry gardens, it seems, in that neighbourhood, Sir, where common folks, and sometimes gentry, go to eat fruit. It was at one of these that Captain Mandeville contrived to make a sort of acquaintance with the poor girl. He was at that time about eight-and-twenty; a very fine-looking man, as I understand,

(for

(for heaven knows he was strangely altered when I saw him,) and had all the dashing air that gentlemen of the army affect. Mary's eyes were treacherous ones, for they played her heart false, and shewed her this gay young officer in his best colours. He was not wanting to himself: it was very easy to find out where she resided, and Captain Mandeville soon became a great customer for ribbons and feathers, which he pretended were bestowed upon his recruits. Never did man enlist so many in so short a time; for by-and-by there was hardly a yard of ribbon left in the shop. In the mean while, vows, promises, letters, and presents, were lavished upon Mary, though in an underhand way you may be sure. The poor girl loved him, and he had discernment enough to perceive it; nevertheless she was innocent and well-disposed.—I do not want to excuse her fault, Sir,—it was a great one: —the

—the greater, as she herself in bitterness of heart acknowledged, because she had not been brought up in ignorance of her duty. But what is to be said to this man, Sir, who saw she was no bold, nor forward creature, ready to throw herself in his way: for she has affirmed to me, and I will pledge my life she spoke truly, that she has many times shut herself up in the back shop, and avoided her accustomed walks, in order to struggle with her own weak heart, and endeavour to forget him. What is to be said to him, I ask? Only what he has been obliged since to say to himself: you will hear it, Sir.—All Mary's efforts, however, would not do. The Captain had an emissary, his serjeant, I believe it was, no less active than his employer in watching and persecuting her. To be short, Sir, it was *his* day of triumph, and the poor girl became his victim.

Melan-

Melancholy was the change that succeeded. Captain Mandeville must have been a hard man, though Mary's partiality made her think otherwise. His heart, his pleasures, his fortune, except when he had some great object in view, were all for himself. He had no care for others; nor, for aught I could learn, had he really any for her, when his first passion had subsided. He was one of those rattling sparks, Sir, who dash on in life without looking to the right or the left, through a long lane of the maimed and the blind, whom they have made so; till, being come to their journey's end, they are obliged to cast their eyes back, and see the sad spectacle of human misery. But Captain Mandeville was then a young man, full of health and spirits: things have changed with him since that time.

All

All seemed now at the worst with Mary. She was ruined, neglected, and had reason to suppose herself in a situation that would soon render her disgrace apparent. Sometimes, as she told me, she thought with horror of being a mother. At others, the recollection of the infantine caresses of her little brothers and sisters, and of the pleasure their parents used to take in them came to her heart; till, between that, and conscience, which began every way to afflict her, it nearly burst. To expiate the sin of having wished to leave her family, and to be sure that was but a fancied sin, she had almost resolved to make a voluntary sacrifice of herself, and carry back her shame and her penitence to her father's house, quitting for ever all sight of the man who had wronged her; when another idea more flattering to her passion suddenly came across her mind: for

poor Mary's remorse was, I fear, as you will see, Sir, only love in disguise.

Captain Mandeville had a very fine estate and house in Northumberland. It was a family mansion, and his mother, as the serjeant, from whom alone Mary got any information concerning him, had told her, resided in it. The wild project of fixing herself somewhere in the neighbourhood of Mandeville Park, occurred to the poor girl. If she lived, she doubted not to get an honest maintenance by labour and ingenuity: but, like most young women in her situation, she was persuaded that she should die; and it was her determination, in that case, to leave such information, together with her child, for the old lady, as would, she thought, secure its being brought up in a creditable way, if only for the sake of its father. Ah, Sir, what sort of a father must that have been
whom

whom Mary dared not, even under such circumstances, trust with his own ! It was at this period of fear and irresolution that the old aunt died. She had long been infirm ; yet her death was somewhat sudden. Her stock in trade was sold according to her own desire, and the little produce fell to the share of her niece. Rich Mary !—Poor Mary ! for she was comparatively both. Never had it been her lot hitherto to possess so many of the goods of this world, never did they appear so worthless in her eyes, nor she in her own. Providence, however, seemed to have furthered the scheme which was agitating her mind, by thus unexpectedly supplying her with means to accomplish it. Yet the great effort still remained to be made : which was to resolve on separating herself forever from the only man on earth whom she loved ; and to convince him, by so doing, that though she had
been

been frail, she was not vicious, nor would consent to continue the disgraceful correspondence, which, more from habitual libertinism than any particular fondness, he still would have preserved.

During the hours of grief and apprehension, which Mary had occasionally passed with Mr. Mandeville, she had more than once talked of returning to her father's house: and as I suppose there were times when the Captain was sufficiently inclined to get rid of her, he had suggested an expedient to conceal the disgrace of her situation, by offering her a paper, signifying that she was the widow of a soldier who had served in his regiment. With this deceitful paper, easily obtained from a careless, licentious young man, who thought nothing of its consequences either to himself or others, a breaking heart—a blasted character—and the little portion

of money that her aunt had left her—for she scorned to take any thing from her seducer, Mary one night secretly departed from her usual residence, and turning her back for ever upon Bristol, took the road towards Northumberland.

It was a long journey to Newcastle, in the neighbourhood of which lay Mandeville Park. When the poor unhappy girl first saw its outward paling, her heart, she often declared to me, died within her, as though she had at the same moment foreseen all the guilt and the sorrow that was to arise from thence.

At last she came within view of the house: and, “Oh,” said she, “how great did *he* seem, and how little did I!”

“What, Mary,” said I, “were you not yet cured then of judging by appearances?”

—Was

—Was it because he was gay and handsome, and had magnificent houses, and large parks, that he was in reality better than you? or how were you sure that in the end he would be happier?”

“Most true,” she replied; “but I had sinned against my conscience, and every living being seemed greater and happier than I was at that time.” No wonder Mary was dazzled, however, Sir, for I have been told since that it is a very fine house. The hall had grand marble statues in it: there was a shrubbery of I can’t tell you how many acres extent, and grounds without end. A stately lawn was in front, and vast quantities of deer feeding under the trees. Then there was a library, worth I know not how much money, with painted glass windows, and curious busts. What a pity, Sir, that these rich gentlemen who set up the heads

of so many good and wise folks, can't get a little of their hearts ! For my share I never saw the Captain, and heard talk of his fine feats, without calling to mind the parable of Nathan and the lamb. How can it be that those who are able to command so many pleasures, can, for a temporary gratification, deprive another of their only comfort !

Under pretence of indisposition, though indeed it could hardly be called a pretence, Mary was set down at a decent public house, in the neighbourhood of the great estate. And here, what with agitation of mind and fatigue of body, she found herself really so ill as to be obliged to go to bed. Sleep, however, she could not. So after a restless night, full of melancholy reflexions, she was up with the lark, and once more on foot. I need not tell you, Sir, which way she turned her steps. It
was

was a clear fresh morning. The dew lay on the grafs: birds were singing in every tree, and at a little distance was a fine piece of water, with a hanging wood on one side of it, that dipped its branches in the stream. The village where she was born, and all her girlish days came at once to the recollection of poor Mary; so leaning her head on one of the outer green gates, she relieved her over-charged heart with a flood of tears. In this situation she was seen by a young woman, who observing her, I suppose, to make a respectable appearance, for she was in mourning for her aunt, and interested, perhaps, by her condition, very good-naturedly invited her to rest herself in a house hard by. This woman was the Park-keeper's wife, and the house to which she invited her was that in which they lived. A pretty place, with a fine honeysuckle curling all over the windows on one side, and clusters of grapes

ripening on the other : but no comfort did the sight of it give to Mary, though it was as neat as a palace. There was a baby in a cradle, and a breakfast set for the husband, who was just returning home : they were young people, Sir, and had not been married above a twelvemonth, which no doubt made them so fond of each other : and to be sure the father did so caress and dandle the child ! Mary's heart was ready to burst. Every thing she saw put her in mind of some happiness that was past, or which she could never hope to enjoy ; and she began to cry more bitterly than before.

Well ! with much ado she made out, between whiles, the story of her soldier husband, and supposed widowhood ; blushing and trembling all the time with the consciousness of deceit. But the good folks took it all for gospel. So they comforted

forted her in their way, and pressed her to swallow something that she might keep up her strength and spirits: when lo, just as they were themselves sitting down to breakfast, a little boy that worked hard by, pops in his head, calling out that Mrs. Mandeville was coming; and, sure enough, the words were scarcely out of his mouth before an elderly lady came to the door. She had a sharp shrewish-looking face, though she was not a small woman, and was followed by a young lady, who appeared to be her daughter. The latter had a consumptive air, and was bundled up, as I may say, in a large muslin wrapper. They both walked in, without any ceremony. The young one sat down, like a person who was tired; but the other kept standing, and asking abundance of questions. To be sure all those present stood too, out of respect; and Mary among the rest; though her legs trembled so it was as

much as she could do to make them support her : the old lady glanced at her from time to time, but deuce a bit did she desire her to sit down, ill as she could not but see she was. The young one hardly looked at her at all ; but amused herself with some very choice flowers which she held in her hand ; only once she said to her little dog, who had been all the time snarling and barking at Mary, " Flo' let the young woman alone." This drew the attention of the other lady.

" You have a stranger here, Mrs. Such-a-one," said she, calling the Park-keeper's wife by her name, which what it was I have forgotten.

" A poor body, Madam, that is in great affliction," replied the woman, in a kinder and softer tone than that of the person who questioned her. " She has lost her
husband

husband but lately : he was a soldier in his Honor's regiment."——Oh, Sir, would you believe it? one kind pitiful look from either the old or the young lady, Mary declared would have made her fall at their feet, and tell them the whole truth at that very moment. She felt so ashamed of lying, so afraid of being discovered, and so conscience-struck altogether, that a little, the very least indulgence or sympathy in the looks of those great ladies would have reclaimed her from all her deceits : and what a world of grief would then have been spared ! but they only stared at her, although she was ready to sink into the earth. Yet it was not as if they suspected any thing wrong ; but with a sort of careless, inquisitive air, such as rich people, who have no thought for the feelings of others, often shew to their inferiors.

“ Have

"Have you a certificate, young woman?" said the elderly lady at last, in a drawling tone. Mary took the paper from her bosom, but not a syllable could she say.

"It is Mr. Mandeville's own hand, I see," said the old lady, giving it to her daughter, after she had read it. The latter only cast her eyes over the writing, and returned it without any remark.

This was all the notice they took at that time. However, when they were going away, which was not till they had tired themselves, and spoiled the good people's breakfast, the elder lady turned to Mary, and said,

"If you stay any time in this country, young woman, Such-a-one," naming the Park-keeper's wife, "will be willing, I dare

dare say, to do you any kind office in her power."

And here, Sir, was an end at once to all the hopes that Mary had entertained from the fortune—the fine education, and the tender heart of a great lady! "I did flatter myself," said she, "that seeing me look sorrowful and sick, and having nothing to do but to comfort the sick and the sorrowful, she would have taken some little compassion upon me. I was a young creature then: she had no reason to think that I was a wicked one, and I was in circumstances when a woman ought to feel for a woman: yet, like the Priest and the Levite, she passed over to the other side, and left me to the poor Samaritan: and this was done both by the elder and the younger lady: yet they gave a great deal of money, I am told, to different charities

rities at Newcastle : but they would neither tax their time nor their feelings."

"To my thinking Mrs. Mandeville looks very sick," said the woman to her husband, when they were gone.

"Much as usual," replied he; "she was always so pale since my knowledge."

"She has Madam Selborne's own complexion," returned the other.

"And who is Madam Selborne?" said Mary, who had concluded the stranger to be Mr. Mandeville's sister.

"Why my lady's own mother—Bless you, you did not take the *old* gentlewoman for his honor's wife, to be sure:—the young one is Mrs. Mandeville."

The good folks were sitting at their breakfast, and did not look at Mary as they spoke, for she was standing behind them, near the cradle. Lucky it was that things were so disposed; for she had time to lean her head down, and recover herself from this last stroke; which, although her presumptuous heart had never whispered to her would be any new affliction, yet seemed to double all that she had before felt. She now perceived the extent of Captain Mandeville's art, and that of his emissary; both of whom had carefully kept from her the knowledge of his being a married man: a knowledge which they rightly conjectured would have been an additional motive with her to guard her affections against him. For it was plain to be seen, that Mary might be sooner persuaded to wrong herself than any one else. Who can tell, Sir, besides, what vain thoughts enter into the heart and head of

a young woman in love ; or how far they might, on her first acquaintance with the Captain, have assisted to lead her astray ? Many a man knows how to raise hopes, where he is too artful to give promises ; and belies his own conscience when he disclaims having done so. The self-command which Mary assumed on hearing this news was for a time of service to her, as far as in concealing the interest she took in it. Her spirits, however, could not hold out long, and she fell into convulsion-fits, which, though they did not directly destroy the poor baby, as surely caused its death as if it had been killed that moment.

And now, Sir, she was to chuse where she would go, to provide for her sad hour. Home she could not : her story and certificate would never have passed current with her father : much less with her mo-

ther-in-law: there was not a person nor a place in the whole world that was dear to her; and so she lingered in the neighbourhood of Mandeville Park, uncertain what was to be her future destination, or that of her baby; and only hoping and believing that the same moment would end both.

Mrs. Selborne and Mrs. Mandeville were not much beloved in the country: the old lady was one of those fretful, droning, discontented people, that are always busying themselves about little things; and talk a great deal, without saying any thing to the purpose. Not a pale fell by any accident in the park, nor a plant withered in the green-house, but she was *sure* that it was owing to the neglect of some of the servants; and it furnished her with subject of conversation—that is, of complaint—for two or three days; till a new disaster of no greater

greater consequence fell out : and so, without looking about upon all the beauties of nature, or art, with which she was furrounded, these little cross incidents did so ruffle her temper that nothing was to be heard but reproaches and grievances. Her daughter was somewhat of the same character with herself ; or rather, of no character at all : for as the only subjects she ever thought about were of the like trifling kind, her mother left her nothing to say upon them ; so she passed her life in a sort of dawdling, negligent way, without seeming to care much for any thing ; neither receiving, nor communicating, the least spirit of enjoyment. She had had a great fortune, and a fine education however ; but her piano-forte was always out of tune : and as to drawing and reading she had no taste for either. Her learning, in short, had been so much time and money thrown away. All rich people

people are not I know of this description : but I have seen a great many who are : and it is a consideration that may reconcile common folks to their lot. " The world is divided into classes, Mrs. Dixon," said a gentleman to me one day, when we were talking together about poverty and wealth. " There are those in it who have an appetite, and no dinner, and those who have a dinner, and no appetite : your rich folks are in the second class ; and I doubt whether they are better off than the other." I could not quite agree with him as to that point, Sir ; nevertheless it is certainly a great drawback, to sit down, like Mrs. Selborne and her daughter, to the banquet of Nature, without having the smallest relish for the feast.

Mrs. Mandeville was with child, and near her time. On the first occasion she had gone up to London ; but not having

done well there, and losing the child, she was persuaded that the journey did not agree with her. She therefore resolved to go through her second confinement at Mandeville Park: it was for this reason her mother staid with her. As to the Captain, either his business, or his pleasure, detained him elsewhere.

Near the limits of this Park, poor Mary still loitered. The very little which Mrs. Selborne had said in her favour, was yet something with all the tenants: especially as it had been reported by her first acquaintance, the Park-keeper's wife, in the most advantageous manner. She therefore hired two small rooms, in a cottage which was inhabited by a good motherly kind of woman; and, as a little money went a great way in that part of the country, she saw that she had means to make herself welcome.

Rowing

Rowing upon the water was among the few amusements which Mrs. Mandeville had a taste for. She used to go out almost every sun-set in a small pleasure-boat, built on purpose for her; and Mary, who during these excursions was sure of not meeting her, a circumstance she always dreaded, lest it should involve her in new and more deliberate falsehoods, used to take the opportunity of walking about the grounds. She was on the brow of the little wood one evening, from whence she discerned the boat, with its gay flag and decorations, moving backwards and forwards on the water: Mrs. Mandeville and Mrs. Selborne both were in it; and the latter seemed, by the motion of her hand, to direct the men to approach a small woody ait, where swans were kept. They accordingly did so: but the water was very low, from the dryness of the season, and the bottom reedy. It was

plain that they were soon aground, and were making efforts to free themselves. There was, however, no probability of danger, till one of the men, in pushing off from the shore, suffered himself to incline too much, and in consequence fell overboard. Both ladies started up at once; and by running hastily to the edge of the boat, overset it. Mary waited not to see the event, but, shrieking with apprehension, ran to the house for assistance. All was soon well with Mrs. Mandeville and her mother: for the water was so shallow that the boatmen rescued them almost before they were thoroughly wet: but the fright and exertion were too much for her who had witnessed the scene; and while the servants were carefully conveying the two ladies into the house, Mary, whom no one noticed, found herself so ill, that it was with great difficulty she reached her own humble home.

“ Oh

"Oh Mrs. Dixon," said she to me, "imagine what my sufferings were, when, after a long and painful trial, the first thing I distinctly saw was my own dear baby dead : the first feelings that entered my heart were those of a mother, and of a mother without a child ! to have been lodged in the cold grave, where I imagined Mrs. Mandeville, would have been happiness to what I endured." I am afraid poor Mary never knew what she did endure. Her child did not come dead into the world, however ; but it went off, almost immediately, in convulsions. She had nevertheless an excellent constitution ; and God, Sir, could never intend that women should die, just when it is most necessary that they should live. Not but poor Mary might have been released : for, alas, she had no infant to take care of ! however, it pleased Providence to save

her; and, contrary to all probability, she began to recover her strength. She was sitting up one morning, disconsolate and alone, when the woman of the house came in; a good creature, but a very ignorant one, as you will see, Sir.

“ Well,” said she, on entering, “ God Almighty don’t send burthens to common folk alone! there’s the young Squire, as the sarvants says, won’t live neither. His mother won’t suckle him; and the dry-nurse, as come from Durham, can’t manage to make him keep life and soul together, with all her fine silver boats and new-fashioned ways. Old Madam Selborne says, that for self-willedness he is his father’s own son, for nothing will he swallow: so you may comfort yourself that you are not the only poor soul as loses a child.”

“ Oh

"Oh that I could save one!" said Mary, and a thought glanced across her mind. "Will he live if he is suckled, do you say," added she, impatiently. "Is it Captain Mandeville's child of which you speak? Is *he* born?"—and then the recollection of her own words, is it *Captain Mandeville's child*, as though no other than the heir could be his, put her into a second agony of tears. The child had indeed been born several days before, but it was in no way to live. It was a sickly little thing. The mother never intended to nurse it herself: and if she had had the will, the doctors said she would not have the power, so the poor babe, as they could not rear him with dry-nursing, which they had all along intended to do, was like not to be reared at all.

Well, Sir, it does not signify going round about the bush: by the recommendation

commendation of the Park-keeper's wife, the babe was put to Mary's bosom. With many a bitter heart-ach, and many a tear did she receive it. The poor little thing began from that day to get strength, and its first smiles, its first looks, were Mary's. His mother saw him not, or very rarely. She and Madam Selborne were shut up together, grumbling and scolding at every thing, and every body. The old lady insisted upon it that her daughter could nurse the child; that it was the custom of her day, and that the new-fangled notions were all mere nonsense. The daughter, on the contrary, would neither spoil her shape, nor endanger her health by any attempt of the kind. "She saw no benefit arise," she said, "from having been suckled by her mother herself; and that old customs were good for nothing but to contract people's ideas, and make their lives uncomfortable." Whether comfortable or
otherwise,

otherwise, it was soon seen, when Mrs. Mandeville came abroad, that she was not long for this world. Not but she had had a good time enough: but all her family had been consumptive, except her mother; she herself had shewn symptoms of being so, before she was confined, and she brought out of her chamber all the appearance of a rapid decline. This she imputed, however, only to delicacy of constitution; for she was very fond of being thought delicate: so nobody ventured to tell her the truth. It told itself at last: but too late to be remedied. Captain Mandeville was therefore sent for in all haste: however he made none in coming: and before he arrived, another express was dispatched to inform him that his wife was dead. He stopt short at York, and wrote from thence to Mrs. Selborne, requesting that she would undertake to order every thing that was suitable on the occasion, and informing

forming her that he would be at Mandeville Park within a certain time.

This was a dreadful interval for Mary. She could not resolve to stay; much less could she resolve to depart. The baby's very life seemed to depend upon her care: neither night nor day had she ceased to watch it; and if there was a moment when she remembered with sorrow that it was not her own, she at the same time called to mind that it was Captain Mandeville's. None but a woman, Sir, can tell how closely the infant creeps into your heart that lies at your bosom; and, if in common cases this is daily proved, what wonder that Mary's fondness exceeded all common measure! It had even no longer a mother to excite her jealousy, or share her attentions: and the early loss which it had sustained, seemed to point out a particular providence in the manner by which

which that loss was supplied. In short, Sir, love, *maternal* love, I think we may call it, conquered fear, shame, and every other feeling. Mary therefore at length resolved to stay, and encounter the man, whom, in any other circumstances, she had determined to fly to the world's end to avoid,

Captain Mandeville arrived within the time appointed, just after evening had closed. Mary heard the clattering of his horse's feet, and soon after his well-known voice and step. The many—many occasions when she had listened to them with a beating heart, interesting as they had been, were all, she thought, nothing to this. He staid some little time below with Mrs. Selborne, and then the feet of both were to be heard on the stair-case.

“ Now,”

“ Now,” exclaimed Mary, with a palpitating heart, “ now comes the trial!”—and she turned to the infant that was sleeping sweetly in its cradle—“ Oh, if it were *my* child that he was coming to look at,” she softly whispered—“ but mine sleeps sounder still!”—

Mr. Mandeville came in: he neither cast his eyes to the right nor the left; but, with a candle in his hand, walked straight to the cradle, and stooping down to see the baby, kissed its little hand.

“ Will he wake, do you think?” said he to Mrs. Selborne, motioning to kiss its cheek.

“ Oh no, no, no,” murmured Mary, pursuing in the anguish of her heart, nothing but her own recollections, “ it will never

never wake again." Mr. Mandeville started at the voice, indistinctly as it reached him, and turned towards the speaker; but she was at a remote end of the room, and the single candle which he held did not enable him to discern her features.

"Who is that person," exclaimed he hastily, to Mrs. Selborne, "and what is she saying?"

"She says that you will not disturb it: it never wakes, I believe, at this hour." they then talked together, in a low voice, of its health, its age, and its mother.

"You will probably recollect the young woman who nurses him," concluded Mrs. Selborne, after saying something which Mary did not distinctly hear. "She is the widow of a private who served under you; she owes the place to your recommendation."

mendation." The abashed and unfortunate girl leaned against the chimney; her eyes, which she raised only for a single moment, swimming in tears. How Mr. Mandeville looked she had no opportunity to observe, but not a word had he presence of mind enough to utter. Mrs. Selborne meantime, was settling the cradle-cloaths, and thought of nothing less than of watching either of them. She at length broke the silence by finding a hundred faults; after which, without waiting to see one remedied, she took the candle, and, followed by Mr. Mandeville, walked down stairs. And thus, without the interchange of a single syllable—nay, even of a look, parted Mary, and the man who had so often sworn that he lived only in her eyes.

Mr. Mandeville staid but two days longer at the Park, during which time Mary, by

substituting in her own place, at certain hours, a girl who was sometimes employed as under nursery-maid, contrived that they should meet no more. She learnt, however, that by means of this girl, Mr. Mandeville had satisfied himself her child was dead: and she had reason to hope that he had gathered enough information as to what related to her, to be assured that she must on this occasion have purposely shunned him.

And now, after Mary had been so heavily beaten by the storm, an interval of tranquillity seemed to succeed in her life. As Mrs. Selborne's house at Durham was repairing and painting, it was settled that she should continue to reside at Mandeville Park till the autumn: after that time, the child, the maid, and all that belonged to the nursery, were to remove with her, and to remain under her charge, till the boy was of an
age

age to be put into that of his father. The old lady took care to secure herself a handsome allowance for all this trouble: though even when that was done, she did nothing but lament and complain that she should be so unfortunate as to have such a tax laid upon her at her time of life! Her poor dear daughter, with whom she never could agree when alive, was now talked of as a miracle of perfection. The finest boy in the kingdom, she declared, would have been too dearly purchased by her loss: "and for that poor little puny thing, I am afraid," she used to add, "that, with all our trouble, he will never live to be a man: which would be a great pity, considering what a fine estate he is heir to!"

Mary hoped better things. The infant was not robust, but it daily grew stronger, and to her daily more precious. It was her care, her pleasure, her employment:

it engrossed her whole soul, and by degrees filled up all those fond affections of her heart, which had no other object they could venture to dwell upon. The very circumstance of its not being a strong child, made it only the dearer; by furnishing a perpetual succession of hopes and fears: both were already in some sort rewarded. It began to distinguish her: would crow when she appeared; "and stretch its little arms as it would fly," when hers opened to receive it. The range of Mandeville house, with the beautiful grounds, pleasure-garden, and country adjoining, were in themselves sources both of health and delight. She enjoyed almost undisturbed possession of the whole. "What more could I gain, had I been born in a rank to have become its mistress," would she sometimes say to herself, "except an ungrateful man!" Tears then would fill her eyes: "but this baby would indeed

have been mine.—Well—and could I have loved him better?” The recollection that had she been his mother she need never have feared parting with him, would again agitate her heart, and unsettle her spirits. “But I will never part with him,” thought she, “even as it is, till he be a man grown—and then his very mother must have done so had she lived. Mrs. Selborne, when I am no longer wanted in one capacity, will be sure to let me stay with her in another!—I will make myself so useful!—Nobody will bear her humours so well, for nobody will have so strong a temptation to do it. So that it will be a great many years before I lose sight of my little boy, and I warrant I will teach him to love me before that time!” She *did* teach him to love her, Sir: he must have been an unapt scholar, indeed, that had not learnt.

I would

I would not have you believe however that these quiet days were without their alloy. Mrs. Selborne was not a woman to let any body in her circle enjoy themselves too much. Every now and then she was seized with a fidgeting humour that was the torment of all around, and of Mary in particular. Nothing then went right: nothing pleased her. This fit held just long enough to make her find fault with every thing, but never induced her to take the trouble of setting it to rights; so that she constantly left off where she began: only with an idle waste of time and spirits to all the parties concerned. This was far from being her only employment, however: she was a very stately dame, and fond of visiting: so that every other day her old-fashioned face was to be dressed, and the chariot and best liveries to be brought out, that she might dine or drink tea with Sir Thomas's family, or Lady Dowager

Such-a-one; for she did not condescend any lower: and it was not seldom that she gave fine dinners at the Park: the servants said, because it was not at her own expence. Then young Master Mandeville was brought in, to be shewn, during the desert; and *her* cares—*her* anxiety—*her* fondness, as pompously detailed, as though she had spent her whole time in watching him. But these and other things of the like nature, were nothing in Mary's calculation: all went as well with her as after her sorrowful outset could be expected. So well, that she ventured to write home, in order to enquire after her father and friends; though she did not tell them any thing that related to herself, except that she was in the service of a very great family.

Just in the beginning of autumn, when every thing looked full of happiness and

beauty, and Mary's heart was daily more light on seeing her nursling prosper in the way he did,—Dear Sir, would you believe it?—One night Mr. Mandeville alighted at his own door! his coming was quite unexpected on all hands. The old lady was at cards with some of her grand neighbours, and not much better pleased at the surprise than Mary was; but *she* was not afflicted. It seems that there were some races in the neighbourhood which he purposed to visit: so not thinking it necessary to give notice of his intention, while his household was kept up, he came thus, all at once, upon them. He only shewed himself, as I may say, in the drawing-room; and then, observing that his boots made him not fit company for ladies, I suppose those present were none of the youngest, he walked at once to the nursery. Mary had summoned all her courage to meet him; but as she trembled so that it was

difficult for her to hold the child, she called up the young woman I mentioned before, to her assistance. When he came in, there were two of them, which he did not seem to expect. However he took no particular notice, but kissed and tossed the child about, bidding Mary catch it: and all this with an easy, familiar, careless air, which, together with his rough play to the infant, so overpowered her that she was near fainting. I suppose he drew his own conclusions from her agitation, but he said nothing at the time: only, on going down stairs, he took out five guineas, and gave them to her, as he said, for her care of the child: offering something at the same time to the other girl, who most thankfully accepted it.

Mary's happy days were now at an end. The woman that does wrong must, I fear, remember, Sir, that she will be always
exposed

exposed to suspicion : Captain Mandeville, it was plain, had no faith in after-virtue, when he had found it failing in the first instance ; and although a decent respect for circumstances, or accidental indifference, had induced him to take no notice of her during his first visit to the Park, these motives had ceased to operate, and she even perceived that he suspected her of placing herself voluntarily within his reach. Humbled by this opinion, which she was unable to obviate ; finding all remonstrances vain, and all efforts to avoid him useless ; her life now became as miserable as it had before been tranquil. To complete her affliction, Mrs. Selborne soon suspected that some particular pursuit detained her son-in-law at Mandeville Park ; and she quickly guessed its object. How Mary passed her days in consequence of all this you may judge, Sir. Her greatest fear, nevertheless, was that of being dis-

mised; which she was in hourly expectation would be the case: and her only hope, that Mrs. Selborne, not having authority to do that, or to control Mr. Mandeville, would hasten her departure to her own house. No such fortunate circumstance however happened. Mr. Mandeville, finding solicitation and allure-ment vain, grew insolent and troublesome: the servants sneered: the park-keeper's wife avoided her; there was no security from persecution either in the house, or the grounds; and, in short, of all that had soothed or comforted her poor heart, nothing remained the same, but the baby.

Mary's mind began, I fear, to undergo a strange revolution about this time. She grew desperate, as it were; and has acknowledged to me, that she sometimes debated with herself whether she should not accept his fine offers; for, rather than be
crossed

crossed in his inclination, he did offer her liberally, Sir; at others, she determined to tell the whole story to Mrs. Selborne, and throw herself upon her mercy: but against one temptation there was remorse, and a thousand other painful feelings, resulting from her experience of the selfishness and cruelty of the man: against the other, stood the severe temper and unfeeling character of the woman. Shame too, at the thought of being exposed and degraded in the eyes of the neighbourhood, for she feared they would judge hardly of her, made her resolve, whatever might be the consequence, to keep her own secret. No third project then remained, but that of quitting the family altogether: and this she so nearly determined upon as to collect all her little savings; so that if driven to extremities, either by the persecution of Mr. Mandeville or Mrs. Selborne, she might be able to leave the house at a moment's

ment's warning : but how was she to leave the child ?—The thought of doing so, was little less than a death-stroke.

I am afraid, Sir, that when temptation of any kind fails even as to its main object, it often brings with it a great many evils not included in the views, nor present to the mind of the tempter. In the first place, it encourages a certain daringness of spirit, not favourable to modest virtue ; it teaches us to weigh the right and the wrong of things that have been hitherto sacred in our imagination ; and that not fairly either : for it puts the weight into the wrong scale, by shewing us how much may be justified by sophistry, and how much may be palliated by example. In a word, it carries us out of our own bosoms for a rule of action, and bids us whiten by a comparison with the imperfections of others. I speak, Sir, of
common

common understandings and characters, such as have no great head for deep thinking, like Mary and myself. Some transition of this kind must have happened in her; for the whole frame of her mind seems to me to have changed during this period of perplexity and self-contention. She began to believe all the world wicked or foolish; and it was not till after she had lived a good while with me that she was persuaded of the contrary,

Well, things continued in this way till near the time when Mrs. Selborne and her part of the family were to quit the Park: the day was anxiously expected by Mary. On the last but one preceding it, she had the ill-fortune to encounter Mr. Mandeville as she was returning to the nursery from her dinner. He insisted on talking with her; which she positively refused: but finding that he prepared to follow her
up

up stairs, she thought it better to listen to him where she was: Mrs. Selborne was abroad. All that Mr. Mandeville could offer, or say, on such an occasion, for it was his purpose to engage her to remain at the Park with him, may, as one should think, be easily imagined; but you would *not* easily imagine, Sir, that, finding all other efforts fail, he should, before they parted, strive to alarm the fears of the poor girl, by indirectly threatening to publish her former misconduct. I cannot think so ill of him, or of any man, as to believe that he was in earnest: but Mary's agitated heart, and distempered fancy gave credit to the worst. With what little eloquence she was mistress of, she had endeavoured, it seems, to represent to him the great disadvantage her loss would prove to his child; an argument, which, she flattered herself, would certainly prevail when all others failed: but he treated it as a matter
of

of no consequence. "The infant was nearly weaned, and any old woman in the parish might nurse it," he said. Driven to the last extremity, she then positively declared her resolution to quit the country, and find a situation elsewhere.

"And where will you find a character?" said Mr. Mandeville, with a sneer: he had little time for more, as the old Lady's chariot drove up at that moment to the door. "Remember, Mary, what I say to you," repeated he, emphatically, as he opened that of the parlour to let her out: "a hint from me to Mrs. Selborne dismisses you with disgrace from the house:—Where, I say, will you then find a character?"

It was not necessary to bid her remember the words; they were engraven in letters

letters of fire as it seemed to Mary, both on her heart and her brain.

“Where, Mary, will you find a character?” exclaimed she, as she ran up into the nursery, and mechanically took the child in her arms: for it was her hour for walking with him round the grounds. “Where will you find a character?” she continued repeating to herself, as she hurried on, without exactly knowing whither: tears, caresses, and every thing that was afflicting succeeded this tumult of resentment.—I cannot give you an exact account of what followed, Sir; she could never give me one herself: but certain it is, that she continued to walk till she reached Newcastle; and there, meeting by ill-fortune with a small vessel bound for London, and in the very act of sailing, she got directly on board, and still carrying
ing

ing with her the precious child, was in a few hours many leagues out at sea.—Now comes the fearful part of Mary's life! now comes the time when *she* strove to whiten by comparison: to use her little knowledge and experience in justifying a wicked action, and to say to herself, “why should I alone be upright in a worthless and cruel world!” Mr. Mandeville, Sir, could no longer tempt, but his influence had corrupted her, and left her exposed to the temptation within.

She was a total stranger in the vessel where she had taken a passage: indeed, neither the child nor herself had ever been seen at Newcastle, nor was it probable that any living creature there could identify or give an account of them: the baby was in its night-clothes, for they dined late at Mandeville Park; consequently was

no way remarkable by the fineness of its dress. She did not believe that Mr. Mandeville, after what had passed, would venture to seek her that evening in the nursery; and unless it was noticed that she did not return from her walk, the chances were that no enquiry would be made till the ensuing morning: for such had been her unremitting attention to the child, that it was very customary with her never to leave his apartment for a moment when once she had put him to bed.

All these, and a thousand thoughts besides passed through her mind; but her whole care was for the baby: the very few minutes, as I may say, that preceded her embarkation had been employed in providing for its comfort; and as, for security's sake, she had secreted her little wealth about her, in order to convey it to

Durham,

Durham, or elsewhere, there was no difficulty in securing the very best accommodation.

What past at Mandeville Park, when the loss of the child was discovered, or in what manner or time the discovery was made, I never learnt : no doubt every effort was used, by advertisement and inquiry, to regain the infant, but none could reach the ship's crew while they were at sea, and before either could come to their knowledge on land, things had so fallen out that no indications remained to guide the search. It was long before Mary knew any thing farther of Mr. Mandeville, and sorrowful was the day when she did.

The voyage was very rough, and Mary herself extremely ill : but the child did not appear to suffer in the least : they were driven by stress of weather into a little

port not very far from London, where she made it her choice to land: a public carriage, which was stopt by mere accident, conveyed her to town; and thus, almost without premeditation on her side, was every clue lost to those who might have sought for her. What Mary's feelings or thoughts were in the interval that succeeded, it would be difficult precisely to ascertain. She was not without money; but she had neither friends nor connection. Industry, Sir, is nevertheless a trusty auxiliary, and either finds or makes its way. By giving security, which her stock of money enabled her to do, she contrived to get employment in a small but creditable shop, not unlike that in which she had lived with her aunt: her readiness and good qualities rendered her valuable wherever she had an opportunity of making them known; as she very quickly did. Her wants were few: she had neither vanity
nor

nor pleasure but in the child; and he, little fellow, grew, and did well; while her excessive fondness for him, made it impossible any one should suspect that she was not its mother. He was no longer, indeed, at Mandeville Park, the heir of a fine estate, and waited upon by a numerous train of servants: but he had still one servant more anxious, more devoted than any he had left there: he had also the best of every thing, however plain: all her leisure was employed, as he grew older, in teaching him the little she knew either of writing, reading, or accounts: his health was still tender and uncertain: she watched him with the care of a mother, and the fatigue of a nurse. No thought like self-reproach I believe ever crossed her mind with respect to his father: her heart was quite hardened towards Mr. Mandeville; and she was persuaded that Mrs. Selborne would grieve but little for the child when

it was once out of her sight. She shut her eyes deliberately to the past and the future, and determined to think only of the present day.

Such was her own account of her life in London; and I never had reason to doubt its truth. There are those that would have done so: but from the circumstances she stood in, when she gave me the relation, I believe it as firmly as that I now exist. It was a strange life for a young woman, and a pretty woman, for she was still pretty: placed, too, in the very heart of a city so famous for its vices and profligacy: but I have heard Mary say, and indeed I believe her, that many and many a poor creature earns her bread in London by the sweat of her brow, and during her laborious and daily employment knows no more of its vices or its luxuries than if she were living a thousand miles off it.

I saw

I saw Mary for the first time about eighteen years ago : she was then nine-and-twenty : it was in the beginning of summer, and a very sultry day. I was sitting, during the forenoon, at work, with my parlour windows open, when a young woman, holding a little boy by the hand, walked past the house, and returned. She did this more than once without my taking any particular notice of her, though she, as I afterwards found, took a great deal of me : at last she made a little stop close by the window.

“ Did you want an industrious person to assist you in needle work, Madam ? ” said she.

I looked up, supposing I should know her, but her face was quite new to me : so I went to my stitching

again, only carelessly answering, "that I never employed strangers."

"I am sorry for it," said she, and sighed softly; there is no telling you, how winning her manner was: I could not help looking after her, she saw I did, and returned; but a little irresolutely.

"It is true that I am a stranger here, Madam," said she, "but if I were known to you, perhaps you would not object to employing me."

"I can't say that I should," returned I, and to own the truth Sir, I should have been very glad of assistance; for the season was drawing on: I was making up those very window curtains which you now see in the parlour, they were then drawing-room furniture. I had my hands
full

full of business besides ; so I looked more steadily at her, to judge what sort of a person she might be ; and then I looked at her companion : both were plainly, but very neatly dressed ; he was rather a delicate child, but he had lively intelligent eyes : his complexion, however, did not announce health.

“ Your little boy,” said I, “ seems sickly :” tears flowed down her cheeks in a moment.

“ He has had a fever,” she replied, “ but thank God he is now likely to do well : the Doctor tells me that bathing in the sea will recruit his strength, and I have therefore brought him here for that purpose.” I know not what there was so taking in her and the child, but for my life I could not turn them from the door.

“ Well, come into the parlour,” said I, “ and let us talk together; perhaps you may be able to refer me to some one that knows you.” *That* she could not do: but she made me the same proposal which she had found successful in London, of taking work home with her, and leaving a deposit to its value, till it was returned. This looked honest and open; so we began to talk of what she could do. Meantime I had a favourite bird in the room, and the little boy and the bird were grown very intimate.—“ I will teach you to sing,” said the child; and in truth I thought he might well say so, for so musical a voice as his was in speaking I had never heard. Sing, however, neither bird nor child would, when desired; but I was mightily pleased with my new acquaintance; and, to be short, it was settled that she should come the next morning and work with me for a

certain number of hours. She required nothing, she said, but her day-board for herself and her child, till I could judge of what she was capable.

It was now all plain sailing, Sir, and she knew it; for I presently discovered that my industry and usefulness, on which I valued myself, were nothing to her ingenuity. She did *so* cut out and contrive! "And this, Mrs. Dixon," said she, "is just the right pattern for such a thing; and that will do for another." She was like a good fairy: my whole house presently seemed furnished by her skill and industry. I could not doubt but a woman who was so clever must be honest, so I fitted out a little decent back room up stairs, and took both her and the boy as inmates. I can't maintain that this was a discreet step, Sir, considering how very little I knew of my guest. I heard enough talk of its folly
from

from all my neighbours : but I know not how it is, I have seen people wait so long before they could resolve upon a kind action, to know if it was a wise one too, that they never found the opportunity for doing any such in their whole lives.

Mary was now, as I may say, my factotum ; and nothing was performed cleverly that she had not a concern in. We had no regular agreement together : I paid her as well as I could afford to do for her services, and in truth there was no service, however humble, that she was not willing to render me. But, although in this particular she never changed, we had not lived many months together before I saw something remarkable in her general disposition. She had an ill opinion of others, and believed every one selfish and hard-hearted. So that her own good conduct seemed rather to spring from some feeling
that

that was natural to her, than any principle or necessity she saw for it. To hear her speak of a fault, or even of a misfortune in a neighbour, you would have thought her to be almost without any sensibility: but let her witness the smallest affliction, her heart would overflow with kindness, and her eyes with tears. In her general habits she was zealous, active, and obliging: yet there were times when her whole appearance and manners changed. It was then impossible to make any thing of her; for she was absent and negligent: would sigh as if her heart were breaking, and had a nervous, agitated, irresolute air, that sometimes alarmed me for her head. These fits, however, returned less frequently after the first twelvemonth of her residence with me than they had formerly done: and for several years after, her active employments, together with my company, who am not, as you see, of a
very

very melancholy character, drove off the evil day. But conscience, as the Rector told us from the pulpit two or three Sundays ago, is a sleeping giant : we may lull him into a longer or a shorter slumber : but his starts are frightful, and terrible is the hour when he awakes. I thought of Mary as he spoke the words.

Her fondness for the little boy, Sir, was downright folly : but I had seen enough of mothers not to be surprised at that : he was always dressed above his apparent condition : she could deny him nothing ; and indeed he was an engaging little creature. When she brought him to Weymouth he was about eight years of age : the sea air agreed with him wonderfully, and he was never sickly from that time ; but grew so sprightly, so arch, so diverting, that *little Bob* was the universal favourite. He was, withal, very proud ; although nobody
could

could tell of what : it could not be of his birth, or his great estate, poor child ! for, alas, he knew nothing of either ! but in spite of his humble situation, Bob was a great *boper*, and was always talking of the mighty things he would do when he should grow to be a man :—I beg your pardon, Sir—my eyes *will* fill with tears at the recollection : his mother encouraged this folly in him.

“ Mary,” said I to her one day, “ you will totally ruin that boy.”

“ Oh no, no,” returned she, impatiently.

“ You will make his mind a great deal too high.”

“ *I* do not make it,” said she—“ it makes itself.”

“ But

“ But ought it to make itself? Consider he is growing a great lad.”

“ Don’t talk to me, Mrs. Dixon. I cannot controul his spirit.—If you knew how dearly I bought him”——

“ At what price *did* you buy him?” returned I.—She started, and looked at me very earnestly for a moment, but said nothing. I cannot but own that I had my private thoughts. Mary had told me that the boy’s father was a soldier; and so indeed he was, Sir: but she had never been circumstantial as to the time of his death, nor any particulars relative to him. I had my suspicions therefore; though, God knows, they were far from the whole truth; and she was so guarded, so discreet in her conduct, and seemed to have so deep a sorrow at heart for the past, that I had not the courage to add to it by what I thought idle

inquiries. It would be very hard, said I to myself, if a woman should not be able to recover one false step! and—I do not know—I may be wrong, but it seemed to me, that the being obliged to acknowledge and talk of it, inflicts useless suffering, if the person be indeed penitent; and if the contrary, perhaps puts perverse arguments and thoughts into the mind that are better laid aside. For the more frequently a woman blushes, Sir, the less painful it becomes to her: this was my way of reasoning. I have but a poor head however, it must be owned, for these points; so I do not reckon much upon it, but mostly question my heart: *that* always tells me how I would have others do unto me, if I were in affliction, and therefore I go no further.

Weymouth is a gay place however in the season, as you know, Sir. I was aware
of

of this; and, at our early acquaintance I watched Mary very narrowly. We have abundance of fine gentlemen walking about, but none did I ever see her so much as look at: and if, by any accident, their eyes were directed to her, and that was an accident that would have happened pretty frequently if she had encouraged it, she was never to be seen a second time. I used to observe, at first, indeed, that she was somewhat curious to know what regiments were coming and going; but that seemed natural enough, as her husband had been a soldier; and long before I learned to doubt the story of her having been married, I knew that I could trust Mary.

Bob was now twelve years old. No longer a delicate, small-limbed child, but a fine, well-grown boy; with a manly and open countenance, a forward and proud spirit; full of frolic, but without any mischief.

chief. He had beaten a neighbour's son, much bigger than himself, who persisted in calling him *little Bob*; so he was now Robert; and it was laughable to see the vehemence with which he insisted upon this claim. All our acquaintance blamed us for keeping such a great boy at home, without any occupation, and I began secretly to be a little ashamed of the weakness myself; for, to say truth, Sir, I was nearly as weak as Mary on that subject. The child was never idle either, nor was it in his nature to be so: he made himself useful ten thousand ways. There was nothing so low that he disdained to do for those he loved: he has cleaned knives, and gone on errands. Good God, little did I think who it was that was so employed! It was not with Mary's approbation, however, that he did this: but she could not prevent him; he undertook it all as if it were sport: "All for his dear little granny Dixon," as he used to call me.

Think of his making me his grandmother, Sir!—I was then a young woman; but it was his playful way. The fact was, that he had an inexhaustible stock of health and spirits to spare, and having neither companion nor employment, was fain to spend both as he could. Every one, however, that came to the house noticed and spoiled him.—“Gads my life, Mrs. Dixon,” said one of our actor gentlemen, who was drinking tea with me, while Bob, in tip-top spirits, handed us the tea-kettle, “this is a fellow of whom the world may say that “he will ride a bay trotting horse over a four-inched bridge, and course his own shadow for a traitor*!”——To be sure, Sir, Bob was too fond of riding strange horses; but how the child’s foible came to be so generally known was what I never could guess.

* Shakespeare.

Bob's own mind was quite made up as to his future destination. "He would be a foldier," he said, "like his father."

"*Like his father!*" said Mary, and tears came into her eyes. The boy was present, so I could not make any comments upon her speech. We taught him, and had him taught by others, all the little learning we could. I must own that he was not very fond of it, yet he was no blockhead neither; only sprightly and heedless: but in proportion as he grew older his pride made him set more value upon these sort of things, for he could never endure to be wanting in any point that others knew: and though for the heir of Mr. Mandeville he would have made perhaps a poor figure, he was not ignorant for one in his station. The soldiers took to him mightily. The master seeing how fond he was of horses, taught him to ride; which Mary did not object to. They

looked upon him as one of themselves, and acted very kindly by him. But still they were men, and he was only a boy; so that, without meaning it, they made him forward and presuming. The neighbours and people around, told ill-natured stories of his pride and extravagance; but they were so exaggerated that we hardly gave them any credit. Time slipped away, and he was getting on some months past fourteen. Mary's disquietude visibly increased. She made him solemnly promise that he would not enlist for a soldier without her consent; and as he believed that she would not withhold it in due season, he very readily gave his word. We thought him too proud to break it; and, to do him only justice, too kind-hearted; for he well knew the grief it would cost us.

The interval between this time and his fifteenth birth-day was the most melancholy

choly we had ever passed since we lived together. He was almost beyond our control ; yet we knew no harm of him ; but he kept growing very handsome and very tall : every day, therefore, told us that something must be done with him. A dreadful gloom came over Mary. She was no longer the same creature she had been. No sleep did she get at night : no quiet in the day. All was continual restlessness. Her very temper changed ; so that at last we hardly cared to speak with her. Perceiving that she was so very miserable, I concluded that her fear of his going to sea, if not into the army, was the cause of her disquiet ; and I therefore proposed to her to try to get him into some respectable gentleman's service. With all his wildness he was so docile to us, that I did think we could have persuaded him to this. She changed colour at my proposal, and looked at me with an expression

pression I never saw in her countenance before.

"No, Mrs. Dixon," said she very emphatically," when I had done speaking, "*that shall never be.*"

"And why not? He has acted as *my* servant, you know."

"And well he might: he cannot do too much for you. There is no disgrace in the service of the heart:—But Bob shall never take hire!" I did not venture to afflict her further, and we went on as before. About this time a family came to lodge at next door, who brought with them a young woman that was born in Mary's native village: she had not been long from thence, and could give an account of all that had passed there. Mary learned that her father was alive, though in a very in-

firm

firm state of health. He had lost several children, but her mother-in-law had still a large family remaining. The old man, she understood, had been anxious to see her once more before he died; but having no direction to her, had not been able to make this wish known. He was certainly not dead however at that time.

This intelligence seemed at last to make up Mary's mind. The terrible necessity she felt of parting with the boy, had been a canker that had been eating into her very heart; for part with him some way it was evident she must; since neither his age nor his character would allow him to stay any longer with her; and to whom could she give him up, but to his own father? In what manner exactly she meant to effect this I know not. Amid the despair that preyed secretly upon her at the prospect of losing him, after turning her

thoughts a thousand different ways in search of comfort, she found no gleam of it but in the idea of going back to her own village. She had been innocent—she had been comparatively happy there. She believed she should find something to love, and Mary could not live without loving something. I believe she soothed her conscience with the hope of attending her father's age, and watching his death-bed. In short she found it absolutely necessary to hope, if she meant to live; and this was all she *could* hope.

I tell you merely my own conjectures; for her restlessness; her total loss of appetite, and the long fits of absence that now grew very remarkable in her, were the only symptoms by which I could guess that she was privately forming some resolution. I had no clue at that time to her inmost thoughts; but by after events and
confidence

confidence I could trace them. Her health suffered too much to permit me to ask any questions, for I really could not guess what their effect upon her might prove. At length she fixed her determination : but, like a drowning person catching at straws, she could not prevail on herself to take the great step till she had settled every thing that concerned her besides. And so, Sir, this new delay in entering upon the path of justice and uprightness was the cause of all the melancholy story that followed.

I was not much surpris'd when she told me that she meant to take a journey home : but when I found the boy was not to accompany her, I was then sure how things stood between her and her family ; and that he was no lawful son of hers, however fond she might be of him. I must
own

own to you that I had my doubts as to the object of her journey altogether. It is natural to suspect deceit where we meet with it in one instance; and, being now convinced in my own mind that the child was base-born, I assured myself that his father was alive; I concluded that he was some great man, and that Mary, far from turning her steps towards home, was only going to solicit him in favour of his son. I could not misunderstand her intention in other particulars. She was too reluctant to go, to leave me any fear on that subject: and whether the child were base-born or no, I must own that I thought the father had a right to be consulted as to its future destination.

“Well, Mary,” said I, “you leave me a great charge, and yet you don’t tell me your secrets.”

“They

"They are sad ones," replied she mournfully: "but when I return I will tell you all."

"I am afraid I can guess one already," said I in a very significant tone. She shook her head, and looked the image of despair.

"I cannot prevail upon myself to reveal it now. I have tried, but my lips will not move to do it. When it is told, you shall give me your advice how to proceed, and I faithfully promise to follow it."——I believe she spoke truth, Sir: I had seen her lips tremble several times when she opened them to speak to me; and I greatly suspect that half her reason, though she did not know it herself, for resolving to live from me, when once I had heard her story, was, that she felt it impossible

fible to endure the eyes of any one who knew it.

On the eighth of July, Sir, eleven years ago, Mary left me. She looked very pale as she stepped into the stage-coach ; but she reckoned that her absence would not much exceed three weeks ; which, considering the long journey she had before her, was the least time possible. Bob, who at his age thought that period a mere nothing, presently recovered his spirits, for he had been much affected at parting, and began to tell me what we should both do during her absence. His account of my occupations would have made any one smile, the picture was so like me ! he did not tell me all his own, you may be sure, but we made out the evening together between mirth and sorrow ; nor did he, throughout it, shew any impatience at passing so many hours

hours with a talkative woman, old enough to be his mother; for he knew that I should have felt lonesome had he left me. Two or three days passed thus very pleasantly: the boy was not constantly in the house, but he was continually coming backwards and forwards, and asking good-naturedly whether he should do this thing for me, and the other. What a charm is there in youth, Sir! I, that was not his mother, nor even related to him, could not help fancying that any father on earth must be vain of such a son; and most heartily did I wish I had known his, that I might have recommended him to his favour.

On the evening of the fourth day, as well as I can recollect, a message came to me from the people at the hotel, to enquire if my house was let. The season was likely to prove very full, and I had at that

time more than one treaty on foot, but the families were undecided, and nothing had passed by which I conceived myself to be bound. I found that the person for whom the inquiry was made was a single gentleman, and a member of Parliament. It was plain, indeed, that he was a man of condition, for he would have nothing less than the whole house: I mean those apartments excepted which I always kept for my own use. I did not hesitate to conclude an agreement that promised to be very advantageous; and as the gentleman, being an invalid, was impatient to settle himself, I did my best to make every thing ready for him that very night. My apartments were always aired, and there was therefore nothing to hinder his taking immediate possession. When his servants, however, began to dispose of themselves, I was sadly grieved to find that he had so numerous a train as made it impossible for me

me conveniently to lodge them. There was Mary's room, with a little closet within it, where Bob slept. I found I should be obliged to take one of these for the groom. The butler told me that he was a civil, well-behaved young man; and he was smart enough; nay, even genteel to look at: but I did not like to throw Bob thus into the familiar society of servants, and strangers too: there was no remedy however; so the thing was ordered as well as it could be, and the two lads were lodged together. I understood that the groom was a very great favourite with his master; therefore, much against my inclination, I was obliged to give him the best room of the two. In the evening his master came—Oh, Sir, would you believe it?—it was no other than Mr. Mandeville!

Yes—it was Mr. Mandeville himself! but not that Mr. Mandeville who had

robbed Mary of her heart, in all the bloom and fire of eight-and-twenty; free-living and the years that had passed over his head, had left strong traces on his features. He had a fixed redness in his face, and had lost the slightness of his person. One might indeed see that he had been handsome, for he had a manly character of countenance; and I could afterwards recollect that his son greatly resembled him in this: but such was then the wide difference in their age and appearance, that nothing of the sort occurred to me.—How indeed should it?—

Mr. Mandeville was well enough pleased with his accommodation; and had he been otherwise, he had very little choice besides in the town: but the satisfaction was by no means mutual. I soon perceived my mistake in believing that I had secured a quiet invalid for my lodger, who proposed nothing to himself but health and comfort: these

these were the last things thought of by any of the family. Such a scene of confusion as now presented itself, I had rarely ever before witnessed ! eating, drinking, and rattling the dice box were the sole employments of the day. Mr. Mandeville went little abroad ; but two or three gentlemen, at least, were constantly of his dinner party ; and it was seldom that all of them went away sober. These modes of life did not agree with him. He was frequently very ill, and on such occasions I often went to see and attend him. I could not help one day representing to him that he had but little chance of recovering his health, while he continued the very habits that had injured it. He was in good-humour, and heard me out with much patience ; only he laughed heartily when I had ended, and said, “ you talk like an oracle, Mrs. Dixon, but I fear I am too old to mend.”

"Nay, Sir," said I, "age will not hinder your amendment. You cannot have seen fifty I am sure."—Between ourselves I thought I spoke within compass when I said this : he laughed again.

"What, is that your standard age?" said he. I have six years good then : though I see you think me an older fellow than I am. However, spare your preaching : for I believe, Mrs. Dixon, that I shall die as I have lived. My faults injure nobody so much as they do myself." I had not the boldness to contradict him, but this was not true, Sir ; nor could Mr. Mandeville seriously believe it to be so. I know not whether it can be safely affirmed of any man, but I am sure that it cannot of a rich one ; and to convince myself of this, I had only to look at the instance before me. Mr. Mandeville's profusion and vices were imitated by every servant he had ;

and if they strove a little to conceal this from him, they only added hypocrisy to every other fault : but they did not endeavour to conceal it, Sir ; or in a very trifling degree. His own man openly professed to follow his master's example in all things. The butler was several years older, but he was insolent, unfeeling, and extravagant. The other servants did not fall short of these models : but, Oh Sir ! a worse grief than all remained behind, though I did not immediately know its extent : the groom whom I had been obliged to place with my poor innocent boy, was a very ill-disposed lad ; and the bad effects of his society were too soon visible in the latter, though sooner to others, than to me.

The loss of Mary's assistance threw a vast load upon my spirits and time. In truth, where servants were so disorderly

and ill-managed, I had hardly a moment to spare from my domestic concerns, or to call my own. Occupied as I was, however, I observed that some alteration had taken place in Bob. He affected to be the man more than I thought became him; and began to be very nice in his linen and appearance. He had been hitherto a fine rough boy, ten thousand times more manly than the groom that he admired; yet the latter was a personable lad too; but there was something of native fire and character about Bob, or I fancied so, that was much above his degree: it could not be fancy neither, for every body that saw him used to say the same thing.

Mr. Mandeville was more partial to his groom than to any one of his servants. He was of light weight, active, clever, knowing in horses, and had rode several matches
for

for his master; nor did he ever fail to win: so that for me to pretend to find any fault with Thomas, was quite out of the question. Not but Mr. Mandeville was himself sufficiently severe with him: sometimes, when any thing put him out of temper; and he was not good-tempered in general: but as to the lad's private conduct or character, "he had no business with that, he said: he supposed he was just like the rest." People are men, however, as well as servants, Sir; and by this doctrine may do more harm in one capacity, than they ever do good in another. It was with very great vexation, and some alarm, that I heard of the increasing intimacy between Bob and this young man. I could not greatly blame the boy: he had no other companion; never had had one. He saw the groom carest and praised by his master; noticed by all the gentlemen that visited at the house; encouraged

to be fauzy ; ruling in the stable, where, unfortunately, *Robert* would have loved to rule too ; for he was passionately fond of riding : and how was a boy of his age to make a distinction between right and wrong, when so many of his superiors made none ? Yet he had no mind to be a groom neither, for, to try him, I asked him the question. “ No,” he said, and coloured, “ I will be a soldier.” For several days after this I observed he was thoughtful, and staid more at home than before. At last he inquired of me whether Mr. Mandeville was not in the army. I told him that I believed he was, from the number of military gentlemen that visited him. I fancy, poor lad, the project entered his head of recommending himself to his notice, for he took two or three opportunities afterwards of falling in his way. Once, in particular, he was standing at the door when Mr. Mandeville came
down

down to ride. Thomas, by some accident or other, was not close at hand, and Bob officiously started forward to supply his place. Mr. Mandeville looked at him, indeed, but called at the same moment to the groom before he put his foot in the stirrup, and Bob hastily retired, blushing up to the very ears at the repulse. This I believe, Sir, was the only time that Mr. Mandeville ever cast his eyes upon his son so as to notice him. Nothing, however, came of it, nor did the boy from that day make any further effort.

Three weeks and more had passed, yet Mary did not return. She had promised to write if any thing detained her. I knew not what to make of her silence, and grew uneasy, both on her account, and that of her son. My warnings to him to break off the intimacy he had so lately formed were not attended to, and I had

no power to enforce them. Nor could I send either lad out of my house. They were constantly together. They rode matches on the sands, or elsewhere. Their companions betted upon them: they betted themselves; and I was convinced that Bob lost. I taxed him with it. Nothing spoils the temper, Sir, like the consciousness of doing wrong. This boy, this child as I may call him, formerly so complying and open, was capable of being rude and sullen: quite at a loss what to do, I desired him to write to his mother, and hasten her return. He obeyed me, though not with a good grace: but she came not, nor did we receive any answer, and I repented that I had not written myself: but I was not a ready pen-woman, and had much occupation.—I thought that I was now quite miserable!—I did not know how much more miserable I was to be. Every possible way did I turn over in my mind to
remedy

remedy the mischief I had so innocently caused: but the mischief was doing, Sir, past all remedy:—it was done, as I may say, even while I was considering.

Of what nature the extravagance might be of these two boys I cannot tell, but they had been very extravagant. Bob's means were scanty indeed; the other threw money about like dirt; but I have much reason to believe that he was as ready to take as to part with it. At last neither of them had any left, and both grievously wanted it. My boy would have stopped short; but the wicked one with whom he associated, had other ways of proceeding. The old butler was, in private, his constant theme of aversion and ridicule: and more, as he made it appear, in sport than in wickedness, but it *was* wickedness, I am persuaded, he now proposed to secrete several valuable articles that were in this

man's possession, on which, he assured Bob, he could raise money, and return them without difficulty in the course of two days; declaring, that should it in the interim be discovered they were missing, he would easily face it out for a joke. Robert was, as he confessed, in debt; he had besides contracted a thousand wants, and a thousand wishes, during his intercourse with the worthless crew around him; and too proud to own to any but his immediate companion that he had no resources, he fell into the snare which folly, vice, and ill-fortune prepared for him. The butler, however, was either more subtle, or more watchful, than they had believed him to be. He discovered the fact a very few hours after it was committed; nor did he fail to guess at the culprits. Thomas was first secured, and his evidence criminated Bob.—The latter was with me when they came to fetch him. Never, to the latest moment

moment of my life, Sir, shall I forget *that* ! There was no need of accusation nor proof ; his countenance told all, and both lads were thrown into prison. The groom, however, was too cunning, and, I am afraid, too well practised in secrets of this kind, not to know all the advantage he had over his companion ; and in order to avail himself of it, he immediately applied to Mr. Mandeville. The fact was too well established to allow the butler to recede from his first testimony, but he presently comprehended which was to be the victim, provided either must be so, and a lawyer was accordingly employed, who ascertained it.

If there was any faith to be placed in one, who till the last two luckless months never was found guilty of a lie, Bob was no otherwise concerned, than in being privy to the villainous secret. He neither plotted, weighed, nor executed it :
but,

but, with the incomprehensible inconsideration of youth, ran headlong on, without adverting either to its criminality or its danger: but of what avail was this testimony, Sir, to any heart but that in my bosom? It was close upon the time of the Dorchester assizes; the two lads were conveyed to the gaol there, and Mr. Mandeville's lawyer continued to be employed in the cause.

At this crisis I at length received a letter from Mary. It was in answer to one I had written her ten days before. Another from me had followed close upon it; for though I was but a poor scribe, I had taken the trouble to send her a second letter, because I had not been sufficiently pressing about her return in my first: that second, however, was still on the road. What a story had I now to add to it! Her father, she informed me, was dead before she arrived.

arrived. She had found her mother-in-law extremely ill of a fever, which, it was plain, was infectious throughout the neighbourhood. It had carried off one little girl of the family, and another was sick: her home, therefore, had been a sorrowful scene from the day that she reached it. "And yet, could you suppose it, Mrs. Dixon," said Mary, "I have experienced more tranquillity of mind, on finding myself useful to my friends, and kindly treated by my old companions, than I have done for fifteen years past. I will make many hearts happy when I return to you, and then there will be some chance for my own. I should tell you," she added, "that I have had the fever so badly as to be quite unable to use the pen, which must plead my excuse for my silence. I have got out to-day for the first time, though still very weak, and have crept down to one of my old haunts near the river. I
remember

remember when I used to sit in its stony bed where the channel was dry, while the low branches that shoot out of the bank sheltered me from the heat, and envy the water that flowed through so many new places. Now I have been there on purpose to see the fun set : and you will hardly guess why.—I pleased myself with thinking that Bob and you might be walking on the sands together, and looking at it, at the same moment.”—Alas, Sir, Bob saw no fun ! he was shut up in a cell, where it was plain that neither fun nor air ever visited him, for in a few days all his freshness was quite gone.

I cannot tell you how many times I applied to Mr. Mandeville ; but he was all on the wrong side of the question : so he shuffled me off, and told me that the lawyers must decide, and I know not what stuff beside. The lawyers *did* decide, Sir, for
it

it could not be the law. The vile groom was, with difficulty enough, acquitted, and the innocent child sentenced to Botany Bay. There is no telling you the falsehoods the groom asserted to save himself: it was a scene of wickedness that no judge less than God Almighty could have set right. I do not say that any body meant to persecute, or that Mr. Mandeville's lawyer did more than he might think fair: but some one was to suffer, and every thing may be seen, where minds are not habitually upright, through the medium of prejudice and opinion. There were besides a thousand lies circulated and believed in the town: lies of idleness, lies of ignorance:—for aught I know, of malice. And poor Bob, who never, I supposed, made an enemy in his life, had every little fault magnified into a vice.—But when it was all over, and they could do no more, many a one dropped a tear, that had
carelessly

carelessly accredited a falsehood; and few were hard-hearted enough not to pity so young an offender.

I had now no hope but in Mr. Mandeville's compassion. I flattered myself that his interest, if he could be prevailed upon to use it, would obtain a pardon at least, and I sent a most pressing intreaty to be admitted to him.

"You have a face full of care, Mrs. Dixon," said he when he saw me,—“out with it!”

“Oh, Sir!” said I, bursting into tears, “I come upon the old errand—Robert Innis.”——

“Do not talk to me of Robert Innis,” said he; “he has cost me money and trouble enough already. I shall, after all,
be

be obliged, on his account, to part with the best lad I ever had."

"I am afraid you are mistaken, Sir," replied I.

"No, no, I tell you," said he passionately; "there is not his fellow left in the stable.—I would rather," and he swore a great oath, "that he had robbed me every day in the year than have lost him. He was a good lad enough till he knew your 'scape-grace."

"If you would take the trouble to examine into the rights of the case, Sir," returned I——

"A man cannot spend his life in examining your rights and your wrongs, Mrs. Dixon."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said I, "I thought that members of parliament, and rich gentlemen, *did* spend their lives in such examinations."——I cannot affirm that this was uttered without some malice, for my heart was over-fraught, and I was quite desperate: but I did not suppose that it would ruffle him so greatly as it seemed to do. He was too proud to say all he thought, but he *looked* at me!——

"You take great liberties," said he at length: "great liberties indeed, and know nothing of what you are talking about. I desire that I may never hear another syllable upon this business. Justice must take its course. *I* have no concern in it whatever. Justice," he sternly added, as he went down stairs to his carriage, "*must*, and *will* be executed."——Justice *was* executing at that very time, Sir, upon the prime offender; but he knew it not.

I spent

I spent the night in tears, and without going to bed : often wishing the day would never dawn ; for I had promised to go to Dorchester, and inform my poor boy of the event of my application. Would you suppose it ? I found him fast asleep. He had not slept for a long time before. But youth and nature had at last prevailed, and he was in the sweetest, soundest slumber I ever saw. What a thing it was, to wake and hear the tidings I had to tell ! But affliction makes people old before their time. This boy, who had been hitherto so sprightly, and so thoughtless, listened to me with all the silence and self-government of a man. He spoke but very little afterwards indeed : nor would he trust himself to read Mary's letter while I stood by ; but earnestly requested me to write to her. I almost overset him by desiring that he would do so. But on looking in his face, and not being able to endure the sight of what was

painted there, I promised to do it myself: and then, at his particular desire, I went away. I *did* write to Mary, and it was, as you may guess, Sir, a letter that I feared would break her heart when she received it.

What signifies describing all the sorrowful hours that succeeded? but never—no, never shall I forget the last time I saw the poor lad, which was the night before he was sent from Dorchester to be put, with other convicts, on board the vessel. He was sadly downcast when I came into the cell; and his once healthy countenance was as pale as ashes, except for the red marks that tears had left upon it; for he was too proud to shed any before me, though his breast swelled and heaved as if it would have burst. To be sure it was a dismal sight! so promising a boy!—and not yet sixteen! Ah, Sir, was this, as I

afterwards thought, the little fellow that had been fondled and caressed at Mandeville Park, and for whom so much had been expected!—But is not every infant fondled and caressed?—The poorest outcast that ever went in irons to finish his miserable life, as Bob did, in a distant country, has been pressed to some maternal heart, more tenderly perhaps than ever he was!

“I have been considering, Mrs. Dixon,” said the dear fellow, “how it happens that all this evil and wickedness have fallen upon me; and I think I have found out the cause.”

“And what is that, my dear Bob?” said I, for I was still accustomed to call him so, and he never took it ill of me, though he would not suffer any body else to do it: it was the name I used to him when he was a bit of a child on my knee,

and I loved it for that reason. "What is that, my dear Bob?" said I.

"Why it comes, from my having no father. My mother, to be sure, was very good; but then she was only my mother: and you were very good too; but I was a boy, and I often thought to myself that boys should not be governed by women: and her hand was as gentle as her heart: so I grew up without any other guide than my own proud thoughts, and easily fell a prey to the wicked suggestions of others.—Now, if I had had a father, Mrs. Dixon, you see I should have been saved from all this; for if he had been a rich man I should not have fallen into the way of temptation; and if he had been poor and industrious, I should have early learned not to be ashamed of poverty, and his example might have made me industrious too: for indeed I was not naturally wicked!

but

but God," added he, laying his finger on the Testament, which the chaplain had left with him, "as this book assures me, will be a father to the fatherless: and since I have none to apply to in this world, I will put my trust in him."—I thought my heart must have broken: for, with his finger between the leaves of the book, he dropped on his knees, and hid his face over it: and when he raised it again, on hearing my sobs, there was something so sweet in his eyes, that mine were quite blind with tears. Oh, what, have I since thought, had not Mary to answer for! Dreadfully, Sir, *did* she answer for it! Yet, had Bob been Mr. Mandeville's son by her, would not his fate have been the same! for where, even in that case, would he have found a father?

"Be comforted, my good friend," said he, taking hold of my hand, and forcing

a smile as he saw my bitter distress; "I am not going away, you know, for ever: and as to the place—one should not mind that at my age; one may be honest, even among rogues and thieves. I have a proud heart: my pride made me do a bad action: I will teach it to make me do good ones. No doubt there will be people among those I am going to, that will know how to distinguish between a single transgression and hardened sin: and when I have gained their good word, which I will be sure to do, and have served out the appointed time, who knows but I may be taken notice of, and return a great, rich man, to you and my mother!—Yet then perhaps"—here his voice suddenly faltered, and his heart seemed to beat so quick that I thought it would have bounded from his bosom,—“perhaps, after all this sad disgrace, *you* will be ashamed to acknowledge me,—and my mother—oh, she will, I am sure,

be

be gone to that world where neither the shame nor the sorrow of her poor son will ever reach her."—This, Sir, was the only time, for some days past, that he had ventured to speak of his mother.—And I saw that all his courage and pride was quite overcome when he mentioned her name; so we wept for a long time together:—and at his desire, I solemnly blessed him for her, and did all I could to persuade him that she would outlive this sad grievance; though, God knows, I had no faith in my own words: he *had*, however; and when his grief had taken its course, he began to recollect himself, and to resume his natural character. Though in years little more than a child, he had the spirit of a man in him; and his mind seemed so full of youth, and hope, and life, that in spite of his sad situation it boiled over: and he talked to me with so much eagerness of the future: and of all the plans he had laid,
and

and all the resolutions he had formed!—
Poor lad! he little thought there was no
future for him!

In short, Sir, we parted: I, blind with
tears, and half dead with fatigue. From
that time I staid constantly in my own
little parlour, as though I had been a con-
vict in a cell: for I could not endure to
see any of Mr. Mandeville's servants, nor
himself. My whole prayer was to get rid
of them all: and so I remained the most
solitary creature alive: for there was no
Bob now to come smiling and rattling in,
to amuse my long evenings. I reflected, and
conjectured, and considered, as much as
though I had had the power to bring him
back: and it seemed as if I still felt some
hope while he had not quitted England: but
whether he had done so or not, it was im-
possible for me to ascertain: I waited there-
fore most anxiously for Mary's return, who

having more sense than myself, I thought might afford us some counsel or information.

I was sitting very sorrowfully alone one evening, with the newspaper in my hand, waiting for the tea-kettle to boil, and examining, as I constantly did, whether I could find any tidings about the vessel that was to carry away poor Bob, when suddenly a voice that was more like the shriek of a ghost than any human tongue, called me by my name. I looked up, and standing in the door-way beheld Mary. It was horrible to see her. She was not merely white, but livid. Her figure, which was light, and generally somewhat bending, was unnaturally stiff and erect. Her eyes were wider open than usual, and seemed quite glassy : in a word, she looked exactly like a corpse placed upright.

“ Lord

“ Lord have mercy on us, Mary,” said I, starting and dropping my spectacles, “ when did you arrive ?”

“ Where is Mr. Mandeville ?” said she, in the same hurried and frightful tone as before, without taking her eyes off me, or the smallest notice of my question.

“ Why, what signifies where he is ?” replied I, much alarmed, though I did not exactly know at what.

“ Where is Mr. Mandeville ?” again repeated she with great violence, and with a gesture as though she would have seized hold of me.

“ I do not know—I cannot tell,” cried I, holding back in prodigious perturbation—“ William, where is your master ?”

I added,

I added, to a servant who was passing the door.

“ In the drawing-room, Madam, playing with the Major.”

“ Tell him, Mary Lawson must see him this moment,” said she, addressing herself to the man in the same extraordinary way. What he thought of her, I know not ; but he seemed startled : so without farther delay he ran up stairs, and opened the drawing-room door. Sure enough we heard the rattle of the dice, and the two gentlemen laughing : Mr. Mandeville in particular ; for he had a loud and noisy laugh that one could not mistake : it was his last, however, for many a long day !— I suppose the man delivered his message exactly, for the laughter ceased as it were all at once.

“ Mary

"*Mary Latyson*!" exclaimed Mr. Mandeville with great vehemence, "and where the devil does she come from?"

"He had no time to say a word more: for Mary, who had run like a wild thing up stairs, in spite of all my efforts to prevent her, heard his voice and burst into the room."

"Your child—your own child, Mr. Mandeville, save your child!" was all she could say.

He shook her off roughly, for she had snatched hold of the sleeve of his coat: but he changed colour, and looked very earnestly in her face.

"I call God to witness," said she, in a faltering, but very distinct voice, "that Robert Innis is your own son.—He is

Robert

Robert Mandeville."——A pistol bullet could not have taken a more sudden effect than these few words: it was a frightful sight, Sir, to see this great strong man drop dead like a stone at her feet: it was because he was so strong that the surprise thus acted upon him.

A surgeon was sent for, and Mr. Mandeville was immediately bled; his friend, the Major, staying by. They were then shut up in the room together for some little time, after which, down comes the Major into my parlour, with a face full of importance and care.

"Mrs. Dixon," says he, "where is the woman that spoke to Mr. Mandeville just now? I must find out the meaning of her address to him."

"Truly,

"Truly, Sir," replied I, "I believe you must find her senses first; for she seems to be quite bereft of them."

"I wish she may," returned he. I did not altogether understand him at the time, though I did upon reflection. Mary in the mean while was lying on the bed in the back room. She had been in strong fits, and being at last quite exhausted, and half insensible (she had travelled, Sir, without stopping, two nights and two days), I had placed her there, hoping she might sleep: but she heard a man's voice, and was in the room in a moment. Her appearance, however, was quite altered from what it had been half an hour before, and she was so feeble as to be obliged to support herself by whatever was nearest. The Major looked at her most intently. Mary had a sweet face when she was a young woman,

woman, Sir; it was a sweet face even at that crisis: for I know not how, but she always looked prettiest when she was very-very pale. Her deep-set dark eyes and long black lashes, then gave her an air as if something from another world were looking out upon us. You never saw such lashes as she had.

The Major, I say, surveyed her very earnestly; and although his countenance had been extremely stern when she entered, it relaxed a little. He had no need to question her, poor soul! as to what she had before affirmed: for out came the whole of her melancholy tale at once, without farther preamble or delay. He seemed much disturbed at it.

"Woman," said he, resentfully, when she had finished, "you have ruined Mr. Mandeville!"—Mary looked up at him, but not a word did she utter.

"You have robbed him of what was as dear to him as his life!"—Mary looked again; to my thinking they were speaking looks, but not a syllable did she say. I thought the Major seemed embarrassed by them, however.

"This cursed connection," continued he, turning half to me, only, I really believe, to avoid looking at her again, "will cost him both his credit and his happiness."

"It cost me both," said Mary.

"Circumstances were very different," replied he, angrily.

"Very!—for *I* had nothing else to lose!"

I am sure he was moved, for he was a good-natured man, Sir; but he did not

care to shew it.—“The boy—the poor unfortunate boy,” said he to himself. “What has become of him!”—This was touching the tender string with Mary; and off she went again, into something between madness and hysterics: so that finding he had obtained all the information that he could, he charged me to keep the girl close from observation, and returned to his wicked companion.

And now, Sir, if a ship freighted with gold could have redeemed the poor lad, his father would have thought it too little. Letter after letter was dispatched to all the great lords in town, and to all the commissioners at every port where it was supposed to be barely possible the vessel might touch. As to his Majesty's free pardon, that was the very first thing secured. Then there was such hoping, and such expecting, that *here* he might be stopt—and

there he might be stopt ! and such precautions taken to supply him with money, and necessaries, and protection of every kind, that ~~the~~ he might appear like a gentleman when he should be landed !——Poor fellow, little did he think how many great folks, such as once would not have deigned to look upon him, were now daily employed in his service ! But, alas, time passed away, and wherever the ship put in, it was at no place where any tidings of comfort reached him : he was on his dreary voyage, while Mr. Mandeville, racked between hope and fear, was counting the days and the hours. To increase his chagrin, the business could not be kept so quiet but that all his own friends, and great numbers besides, talked of it openly ; and various falsehoods were circulated of the nearly wickedness and bad disposition of the boy ; so that it seemed as if that cruel speech of Mr. Mandeville's which drove Mary to de-

operation, "Where will you find a character?" was now to be verified in the person of his more innocent, and no less friendless child.

All hope of rescuing poor Bob, till he should arrive at the place of his destination, seemed at length over: but orders were forwarded to expedite him from thence by the very first possible opportunity: and during his stay he was to be treated as the Governor's own son, and I know not what fine things were to be done for him. But, in the interim, that better father, in whom he trusted, called him to his last home: for what with mortification, and grief, and hard treatment, as we suppose, the poor lad died just in crossing the line; and the end of all this mighty bustle and preparation, was to hear, that, after a tedious sickness, he was committed to a watery grave. Mr. Mandeville continued to flatter

himself that there was some error in this intelligence, till proofs were received, so authentic, as left him no possibility of doubting.

From the very hour that Mary was convinced that the ship had left the channel, her head had never been right. It would have broken any body's heart, Sir, to hear her talk continually of her boy, and of going to Newcastle to find him: for in her rambling fits she confounded her own first unhappy voyage, and his last, together; and nothing could persuade her that he was not there. Possessed with this wild project, she escaped from those who had the care of her, to undertake the journey on foot. No Robert, as we well knew, could she find: but, to the great surprise of the household, who were now all strangers to her, she re-trod, in this fruitless search, a hundred, and a hundred times, the

the walks, the gardens, and the fields where she had carried him, when a baby, in her arms. At last, knowing every avenue to the house, she stole by some means into the nursery, where, after remaining, as it is supposed, nearly two days alone, she was found watching an empty cradle, and dismissed by the servants. My story would have no end were I to recount all the hardships she must have sustained in her fatiguing and perilous journies. To be short, after wandering, heaven knows whither, she returned to me, so emaciated and altered that I hardly knew her. I comforted her to the best of my power; when, by some good-luck, she suddenly took up the idea that one of those great Lords of the Admiralty, who had been applied to for the boy's release, had secreted him from her, and intended to keep him under his own protection. Since that time she has been perfectly harmless and quiet: talking only to herself or to me: and

in terms so obscure, that only those who know her story, can understand her.

As to Mr. Mandeville, he lives on in a miserable way ; infirm of body, and very sick, I believe, in mind. The tide of public opinion had changed before he left Weymouth ; and I am told, that, great and rich as he is, he too, in advanced life, feels remotely what it is to want a character,—for respectability at least. General report has now laid all the blame on him. He has been at one time accused of wilfully persecuting his own child ; at another the groom was said to be his, and the stranger boy to be the victim. Among so many tales, few people have known which to credit : but all of them tended to the disadvantage of Mr. Mandeville. He has been wounded by cold looks and private whispers : nor, while suffering under the double penalty inflicted by a reproaching world,

world, and a reproaching conscience, has
he even the same poor consolation which
Mary finds, when she fancies, in her ram-
bling fits, that Bob is a great man, and
lives in a palace. Alas poor Mary!

Though justice ever must prevail,
The tear that pity sheds is due:
For seldom shall we hear a tale
So sad, so tender, and so true!

THE
FRIEND'S TALE.

Through these soft shades delighted let me stray,
While o'er my head forgotten suns descend;
Through these dear valleys bend my casual way,
Till setting life a total shade extend.

SHENSTONE.

Sept. 2d, 17 - -

" THIS day Colonel R—, his Lady and friends, left my house, and set off at nine o'clock in the morning for London."

Thus far says good Mrs. Dixon's memorandum-book: but what does the
poetical

poetical register add to this scanty allowance of facts?—It tells us, that nearly on the same day of the month in the preceding year, an Englishman of rank in the service, stopped with his bride, the young and charming Countess de T—, at the warm baths of Lenk. A three months tour through some of the most romantic spots of Switzerland, after fatiating their minds with the bold, the sublime, and the terrible, had at length brought them down to that point, when the human face, even though it bear but little resemblance to the divine, becomes one of the most interesting of all spectacles. The country, into which they had entered during the full glow of summer, already began to assume a new aspect : rich shades of brown, or crimson, mingling with bright and delicate purples, had taken place of the green ; and the soft vicissitude of seasons, imperceptibly extending its influence to

to the heart, seemed, by a wise ordination, to render society delightful, at the very period when the multiplying wants of man make it necessary.

Never were two beings more calculated to enjoy this social system than the travellers. Recently united by the tenderest of all ties, they viewed the world, as they viewed each other, with a disposition to be pleased; a disposition which the spot they now visited was peculiarly calculated to cherish: for it was that on which they first met; and where the casual civilities of acquaintance had ripened into an attachment that decided their fate. Love, however, that tempted them to the union, took care to confine the reward almost wholly to itself: for the chief inheritance of the young Countess, whose father had been a German, was an illustrious name, and a genealogical tree large enough, unhappily,

happily, almost to have shaded his whole domains. It might indeed have passed for the Sybil's bough, as far as gilded coronets and crests could make it such ; but of that more substantial and common fruit which modern times demand, it was nearly barren. English, however, as Madame de T—— was on the mother's side, and brought up at the court of an English Princess, her tastes, her affections, her habits, and finally, her husband, all were English : perhaps too absolutely so. For Lieutenant Colonel Raymond, not old, not ugly, not foolish ; presumptive heir to a good estate, (the actual possessor of which had wintered at Florence on account of a languishing state of health,) was diffident enough to meditate a thousand extravagant projects to conquer his passion, before he ventured upon the more simple expedient of making it known to the object. Nothing could

could be more unseasonable than this delicacy, nothing more perversely captivating: in a moment of tender enthusiasm it was nevertheless forgotten; and Madame de T—, after hoping and fearing six whole ages in the lover's calendar, six months in the vulgar one, had, at length the unexpected satisfaction of seeing the man she loved at her feet, and of receiving from him a sweet assurance that he had been so long with-held only by a generous doubt with regard to his pretensions. The young Countess could hardly conceal either her joy, or her surprise, at this avowal. It was so strange, so extraordinary a prejudice!—Where could be the disparity between them? He was well-born—so was she: he was not rich, neither alas, was she! but he had ten thousand natural advantages, while she—deceitful power of love, how dost thou render the proud humble,

humble, and the vain modest! level the various fantastic distinctions of life; and rub off, through the influence of the favoured individual, all the rough edges of character with which we boldly incommode society at large!

The joyful surprise of the Countess had hardly subsided, when a surprise of a very contrary nature seized upon all her friends, or those who called themselves such.

“How! the favourite of her Serene Highness the Princess of (three stars)! the heiress to the most illustrious branch of (four stars), the lovely and admired Countess de T—, espouse an indigent Englishman, only because he had fine eyes and a good set of teeth!”

“Ah, his teeth are indeed very beautiful,” said the Countess, with the most tender

der and naïve tone imaginable, "but it was not for that reason!—it was his understanding,—his heart!"—

"His heart!—My dear Countess, how you talk!—Has he rank—has he fortune?"

"He has rank in the army: he has an estate in reversion."

"That indeed qualifies the mischief,—but if he should chance to die before it falls to him!"—

"Ah, if he dies," murmured the fair pleader, with a voice subdued by sensibility, "of what consequence will it be how I live?"

By arguments thus incontrovertible, our young orphan, for such she was, at length
silenced

silenced all opposition; and while she hung delighted upon the arm of her husband, as they bent together over the brow of a romantic precipice, or guided him, in her turn, to some simple picture of domestic felicity in those rustic cots which embellish solitude, her defection was lamented by her lapped, rouged, and titled friends, at the Court of (ten stars), as pathetically as if the world had been coming to an end.¹

But although woods, mountains, and glaciers are fine things, yet society, that labyrinth into which the adventurous delight to plunge in search of pleasure, and from which the timid shrink only through the fear of encountering pain, is still the point that every human heart more or less inclines to seek. The love of this, and the same delicate state of health that before brought Madame de T— to Leuk, now

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induced her to try the salutary influence of its springs, previous to her visiting England. Yet the spot, though embellished with the smiles of love, was not a scene of gaiety. The beginning, and concluding seasons of a watering-place, often present to the view only those whom necessity confines there ; a group of melancholy invalids, anxious still to bask in that sunshine which they appear never again likely to behold.

Madame de T— became but too sensible of sufferings which she daily witnessed. She had at first chosen a situation as near the springs as she conveniently could : but the attentive fondness of the Colonel quickly removed her from thence, to one of those beautiful, though rustic habitations peculiar to Switzerland, where the household, presenting a miniature of the patriarchal days, becomes no longer an establish-

establishment, but a family : in this sweet retreat she devoted herself to her music, her books, and above all, to her husband.

“ Yet my friend,” said she to the latter, “ let us not be wholly selfish ! Sorrow and sickness are around. Shall we fly from them because we are happy ? I remember well my first visit here. I accompanied my mother, who was suffering under that malady of which she afterwards died : but I was very young, and as I saw many persons look much more indisposed than herself, I thought her complaints half imaginary ; and the greater part of her acquaintance declared them to be so. I am ashamed to remember how easily I was induced to rely on this opinion. How reluctantly I broke from my gay companions to mingle with the infirm and the dispirited. “ Child,” said she to me one day, when I had been somewhat

impatiently looking out for favourable weather, which I was inclined to persuade myself would remove all her sufferings, "let us not murmur against what we cannot command: let us make the best use of what we can: healthful days are the gift of God only; but, trust me, that to an invalid there is no sunshine like the smile of cheerfulness; nor any breeze so reviving as the breath of love!"—Do you think I did not weep?"

Colonel Raymond entertained the greatest respect in the world for his wife's mother, although he had never had the honour of seeing her: he would have extended the regard to her grandmother, had she insisted upon it, but he had no taste for weeping parties.

"We will have a little music this evening," said he, as he tenderly dried her tears.

tears. "The Syndic will bring his violencello: he is impatient to hear you sing, before he departs from hence: so are Rivaz and his wife: it was only yesterday that they importuned me to remind you of your promise."

"They have a visitor at present."

"Yes: an Englishman. He has been a military man, I think."

"He has been a very handsome one."—Nothing perhaps could be more true than both these remarks: yet it happened that the Colonel was as much out of the secret of the stranger's features, as his wife was of his profession. So certain is it that our habits of thinking decide the measure of our observations: the reason why some people make none, and others, such an abundance of frivolous ones. That the stranger was

not well had, however, been obvious to both: it was therefore agreed, that to amuse him he should be added to the party: but he proved ungrateful, and would not be amused; on the contrary, he charged his host with his thanks and apologies. He was evidently wrong; for the party was delightful. Among those who embellished it, Angelique, the fair daughter of Rivaz, was not the least admired. Just turned of one-and-twenty, tall, graceful, with one of the sweetest voices in the world, breaking into natural trills, and graces, it was only when she sang that one discovered she could be beautiful: but who then could be so beautiful?

Madame de T— no longer encumbered with a hoop, a stiff coiffure, and all the troublesome formality of a court-dress, was herself very captivating. To the sprightly graces she united that delicate taste, which,
by

by a charm incomprehensible to those who do not possess it, is communicated to every thing it approaches. Within her precincts all was fairy-land: without, the eye commanded a bold and romantic scenery, the features of which insensibly harmonised towards the fore-ground, into an image of tranquillity that made the little spot which she consecrated seem its centre.

Each sound too, here to languishment inclin'd,
Lull'd the charm'd bosom, and induced ease :
Aërial music in the warbling wind,
At distance rising oft, by slow degrees
Nearer and nearer drew : till o'er the trees
It hung !——

“ Is not that your guest, who stands at this moment on the brow of the hill ?” said Colonel Raymond, taking the flute from his lips, and pointing it towards the spot.

“ I think it is: but he is not, properly speaking, our guest, he is our lodger,”

returned Monsieur Rivaz, with the frankness of an honourable poverty. "We are not rich enough to entertain guests."

"He must be very unsociable," said the lady of the house, "since he refused to join our party."

"Parties are his aversion: and, I believe, he does not love to hear music."

"Then he has no sensibility."

"I doubt the conclusion," rejoined Rivaz, with a shrug.—The stranger, who considering that he did not love music, seemed oddly fixed to a spot where the distant strains could just reach him, now appeared to suspect that he was observed, and slowly withdrew; but he withdrew only, as it proved, to shew himself again with more
pro-

propriety: for the Colonel and his lady were yet loitering over a late breakfast the next day, when, in acknowledgement of the invitation of the preceding one, Mr. Stanhope was announced. Mr. Stanhope was a man of about five-and-thirty; tall, and gentlemanly: with eyes that announced more of mind than all Lavater's noses and chins ever promised. His dress was an English blue coat, and he wore his left arm in a sling. In his address there was a tincture—a very little tincture—of singularity: a sort of proud indifference, that seemed at once to assert its level. In a word, the influence of a decided character, acting upon an habitual politeness. Madame de T— had not forgotten her old partiality for good eyes and teeth. Now it happened! that Mr. Stanhope's smile, though rarely to be seen, was by far the most pleasing expression of his countenance. He did smile however very agreeably

ably on being rallied by her on his aversion to music.

“The report of Monsieur Rivaz,” replied he, “is not quite exact: it is only good music that I shun, I have no objection to the mediocre.”

“Surely one objection is rather more unaccountable than the other.”

“Indeed! I hope you will always think so, Madam,” replied Mr. Stanhope.

“Ah, the chords of that heart have, I fear, been strained into discord,” said Madame de T—to herself, as she looked at him; for his smile vanished as he uttered the last sentence.

“What say you, Augusta, to Mr. Stanhope’s exception?” cried Colonel Raymond,

mond, " may he venture amongst our circle?"

" By all means: his exception is exactly what some of us ought to desire. We may perhaps convince him that his feelings are in no danger from our harmony."

" I am a bad visitor," returned Mr. Stanhope, whose countenance had insensibly resumed its serious cast.—" My tastes—my habits, have long been unsocial:—and my stay here will be so uncertain!—In the interim I visit the springs every day for the benefit of my health; see I know not how many strange faces, and speak to I know not how many strange people: if you knew what a solitary mountaineer I am, when at home, you would calculate the trouble it costs me to prepare both my mind and my person for such an exhibition.

tion. I cannot resolve to mingle in general society : and how shall a stranger dare venture to propose intruding on your domestic retirement?—I shall not, however, acquire a character for diffidence,” he added, after a pause, and half smiling, “ when I add, that it was nevertheless with this hope that I presumed thus to present myself to you.”

“ Chuse your own mode of visiting,” replied Madame de T— : “ our plan is indeed retirement, but not seclusion ; and those who can embellish it, will always be welcome.” So gracious a reception seemed to encourage and attract their new acquaintance. His visit was of some length, and he took his leave with reluctance.

There was that in Mr. Stanhope’s conversation and manners which greatly pleased the Colonel : there was that in his countenance

nance which as greatly pleased the lady: and, while listening to a discourse between him and her husband, in which she had taken little share, she had revolved in her imagination every probable circumstance that could give to such a countenance an air of spleen and depression, that did not seem natural to it. In the midst of these contemplations she cast her eyes—it may be by chance, or by the habit of her sex, upon his coat: it was not an ill-cut coat,—but it seemed to have done hard duty,—in truth, it was somewhat threadbare. One secret at least was discovered therefore,—Mr. Stanhope was poor. She now looked at him again, and thought him rather more prepossessing than before. Whatever in his address had struck her to be pride, rose into dignity: negligence was graceful self-estimation: in short, having looked away all of her heart which she had to bestow,

she

she was not dilatory in communicating its impulse to her husband. They walked the next day to the spring, and while discussing the subject, encountered him who had given rise to it: but he was in one of his unsocial moods, for he only bowed and passed on: yet, as at a certain distance he turned his head, Madame de T— noticed something anxious and singular in the earnest look which he directed after them: and a curiosity, almost amounting to interest, at once took possession both of husband and wife, nor was it very soon either gratified or subdued: for Mr. Stanhope, though he neglected not to avail himself of their invitation, remained perfectly silent on all that respected him individually; leaving it to his general conversation and habits, to create internal conviction that he was at least well-educated, and, most probably well-born.

“ Our

“ Our new acquaintance, Stanhope, has, I suspect, been in the army,” said the Colonel to Rivaz, protracting a morning visit, in order to sound him on the subject of his guest. “ You, probably, have known him long, and can tell me something of his resources and connections.” Rivaz knew nothing of either: he was a quiet downright Swiss, who, having served his country in a civil capacity, and lost an only son in the military one, had for many years retired from public affairs, and devoted himself wholly to agriculture: nor had he the smallest curiosity as to the business or concerns of any one with whom he associated.

“ Of Mr. Stanhope’s English connections,” said he, “ I know nothing. He resides at present in that part of Switzerland which borders on the Valais: where the hills of St. Gothard, intersected by an-

other chain, form a wild and savage country inhabited by some of our poorest mountaineers. There are, I have been told, spots of singular beauty to be found there, by those who have personal strength and agility to explore them. Mr. Stanhope seems hardly to rank among that number : but he has an undaunted spirit and perseverance in every thing he undertakes. He is known to some of the most respectable persons in Berne ; and when he first visited this spot, which was about two years ago, his interesting manners, and a resemblance which my wife fancied she saw in him to her son, induced me, on the authority of one of those persons, to admit him as an inmate. He was then suffering very severely from a bullet lodged in his arm, the consequence I fear of a duel ; and which, as no operation has yet been able wholly to relieve him from, still occasionally enfeebles it. But I have never repented my
hospita-

hospitality. He is intelligent, brave and humane. He was a brother to my poor boy, when he returned wounded from the army ; and on his death, Mr. Stanhope forgot all his austerity and reserve in order to console us."

"Austerity and reserve ! are those then features of his character ?"

"To me they appear the marking ones."

"I should not have judged so."

"Then you have seen him in a very favourable point of view. In truth, I rather think you have. For what purpose he has relaxed from his usual habits; I know not ; but I was certainly surprised to find that he had the other day volunteered a visit to you :

it is a circumstance that I have never known occur in the case of any person besides: for he uniformly, and decidedly, shuns society."

"Why then does he come here at this season?"

"I know not: something unusual disturbs him; I remember he said that he hoped to find a friend."

"And he has sought only me," said the Colonel musing. "There is, indeed, no other Englishman here. But his reliance ought not to be thrown away."

"I hope that it will not!"

"I am sure that it shall not, provided I have the power to be useful to him."

"Dear

“ Dear Colonel,” said Rivaz, whose eyes and countenance brightened as he spoke, “ you are then the friend he wished to find. I suspected as much : it is so rare a thing for Mr. Stanhope to be interested in any person, or to praise, that when he broke silence the other evening to speak with such high panegyric of you and your charming countess, I own it appeared to me somewhat extraordinary : but why then does he profess never hitherto to have known you ?”

“ For the best of all reasons, my good Sir, because he never hitherto did. You have misconceived me. Mr. Stanhope’s acquaintance and mine is of very late date. I must cement it by serving him.”

“ Ah Colonel, you come from a happy country, where every body is rich enough to be able to oblige.”

“ I am unfortunately an exception to that general rule then,” returned the Colonel laughing, “ as far, at least, as wealth is concerned : but I have influence and credit : let Mr. Stanhope, therefore, convince me, by his frankness, that he deserves I should employ them, and I may really turn out to be the friend he came in search of.”

“ Let *me* speak to his desert,” replied Rivaz with unusual enthusiasm. “ I will pledge my life that there is not a better man existing. My wife quite adores him for his goodness to our family : indeed, she often says, that if he were not so much of a philosopher in some things, he would be an angel.” The philosopher entered the room at that moment : but his appearance had somewhat more of the angel in it, than a mortal well-wisher would have desired to see. A faint and hectic glow upon his cheek,

languid eyes, and an exhausted air, were all symptoms of suffering. The Colonel eyed his features stedfastly ; by stealth too he eyed his coat : Madam de T. was right ; symptoms of suffering *there* also ! “ He has perhaps been soliciting a favour,” thought Raymond—“ has been refused—disappointed—treated possibly with insolence by some insignificant and purse-proud German ;—a man of talents, and an Englishman too !—I cannot suffer the occasion to pass !”

The testimony borne by Rivaz to the merit of Mr. Stanhope had not been precisely of the nature desired by the Colonel, as it had no reference to the past life or conduct of the former : but it was warm, it was unequivocal ; calculated to enlist every generous feeling in the service of the person whom he praised ; and it *had* done

fo. Colonel Raymond found himself disposed indeed to an unusual degree of active liberality, for it happened to be one of those bright days in his life when his power to be generous seemed to extend with his will; the mail of the morning having brought him letters from England of a very agreeable tenor. Buoyed up therefore, by that happiest of all sensations, the hope of making happy, he drew Stanhope into the garden, and, forgetting, in his zeal, that he had pre-supposed almost every circumstance that could excite it, made him, after very little preface, an indirect and delicate offer, either of his services or his purse.

Nothing could equal the surprise of his companion at this unlooked-for overture, except as it appeared his pleasure. The latter, indeed, soon announced itself by the
change

change in his countenance to be so genuine and unalloyed, as quickly to take place of every other feeling.

“ I could almost wish,” replied he, “ to be indeed in the circumstances your offer supposes, that you might, by the exercise of your philanthropy, feel a glow like that you have excited. Sensations so pleasurable are not familiar guests here,” and he laid his hand on his heart ; “ nor can I at this moment tell you all their sources. In truth, however, dear Colonel, I have no suffering but of the mind. The appearance that has awakened your concern for my health is now I believe merely caused by the fatigue of those long rambles, I am apt to indulge in, and which perhaps accord better with my inclinations than with my strength. So much for one point !—with regard to the other,—on what circumstance you can possibly have founded your sus-
O 4 picion

picion of my poverty, I own I am curious to know."

"The inquiry will not lead us far," said the Colonel, laying his hand, with a most speaking glance, on the sleeve of his companion's coat. Mr. Stanhope's gravity was not proof against this acknowledgement.

"Alas, poor Yorick!" said he laughing, "is it even so! I knew that I was negligent, but I must confess that I did not suspect I had so far forgotten the modes of life as to be remarkable. I find myself nevertheless more indebted to a shabby coat than I ever was to a better. So, having tried your kindness, I will endeavour, for the future, not to disgrace it." The Colonel now felt a little embarrassed, and attempted to apologize.

"I see

" I see that you are singular in more instances than one," said Stanhope: " you thought better of me when you believed me to be poor, than since you have been undeceived. The world at large decides very differently upon these points. Allow me so far to profit by my knowledge of your character, as to wave, for the future, all the ceremonies of new acquaintance. You took the nearest road to my heart, when you permitted your own to expand. It is an obligation which I shall never forget; and when I am able to conquer a reserve now imposed upon me by circumstances, I will acknowledge it more fully."

The Colonel was too generous to press, exactly at that juncture, into a confidence which he doubted not would soon be freely offered. Intimacy was therefore at once established between them, and every day rendered it equally amusing to both parties.

Yet

Yet two men could hardly be found who, while in essential points they resembled, differed so widely in the minuter ones of opinion. Stanhope's character of mind, like that of his countenance, in its habitual expression, was reserved and severe. But the sunshine of either was irresistibly prepossessing. Colonel Raymond, seen, indeed, in happier circumstances than his friend, was more consistent, generous, and rational. His temper was open and liberal even to the extreme; and his frank and inartificial manners were at once the result of his feelings, and of the habits of his profession. The Colonel's connections were of the higher class, but, in his progress through life, he had had occasion to look below, as well as above him; and either from prejudice or judgment was decidedly of opinion, that the best qualities of the heart are more likely to be vitiated by ignorance than by refinement: in other words, that a
certain

certain degree of intellectual improvement is necessary to both sexes, in order to render the virtues permanent, and a certain degree of polish to render them valued.

This doctrine of intellectual improvement and external polish was a terrible heresy, according to the opinions of Mr. Stanhope. In *his* view of life, nothing was admirable that was not the fruit of unsophisticated nature. What unsophisticated nature might be, was a question that necessarily obtruded itself, and which they found it impossible to settle. They reasoned, they quoted, they wrangled; they brought authorities on both sides. To listen to the two disputants, one should alternately have believed, that men, in their natural state, were to creep upon the earth like brutes, or to exalt themselves to the rank of demigods. They canvassed the point in all manner of ways. They were
some-

sometimes pleasant, sometimes serious, and sometimes, as is too often the case with disputants upon every subject, secretly more irritable than either chose to avow. Nor did they fail still to go hand in hand with other disputants in bringing home one conviction at least to the minds of bye-standers; that the most common effect of argument is to confirm each party more strongly than before in his own opinion. All this time, however, confidence did not increase. They liked each other better every day, and understood each other less. Colonel Raymond was found undeniably guilty, according to the persuasion of his new friend, of tolerating frivolity and vice, in a degree that could hardly be pardoned. Mr. Stanhope, on the contrary, surveyed every thing allied to cultivation or elegance with a suspicious eye. Polished society presented to his imagination nothing but men who deceive or are deceived; whose hatred

hatred or love is equally selfish; and who have wandered so very wide from the natural standard of morals and feeling, as not even to know how to value that which is most valuable in each other. Of women he thought still worse. The sex is indeed one of those unlucky topics that generally distances a man's head or his heart: for where is the phoenix that calls both into the council when he speaks of it? Mr. Stanhope, 'at least, was not such; and his philippic would probably have run to some length, had he not been interrupted.

“ By your leave, we will stop at one half of the creation for the present,” said the Colonel, “ and having, under the name of argument, nearly exhausted invective, suppose, my good friend, we turn to facts. Your experience, it should seem, has shewn you the worst side of the world.—I will reverse the picture; yet go no further for the

the example than my own situation. I have told you that it is not very affluent, and that my hopes of the future are involved in uncertainty.—I marry a charming woman, who could have no other motive——”

“Pause there, if you please,” interrupted Stanhope, in his turn. “I admit no panegyrics as facts, from a man who has been married only four months.”

“Neither Turk nor Tartar was ever more iron-hearted, I see, to the sex,” said Raymond, laughing; “to spare your feelings, however, on the subject, give me leave to observe, that my panegyric there was merely thrown in *en passant*. In the argument of disinterested regard, I give you permission, if you demand it, to except both matrimony and love. Mine will still be drawn from my experience; as,

to say truth, I suspect your more splenetic ones may be traced to the same source. I have the prospect of a fine estate in reversion : the person who holds it is a valetudinarian, and not indeed a marrying man ; but on that subject most men are fickle. I have no present claims on his fortune, never obliged, never served him ; and should he, by any caprice, marry and have an heir, he cuts me off at once, both now, and, if he so pleases, eventually. Yet this very man, on hearing that the connection I had entered into afforded a very inadequate provision, has, without solicitation, made over to me a considerable property. I received legal information of this business on the very day when I made certain unnecessary offers to you ; and I will not deny that the occurrence influenced both my feelings and my conduct. What answer have you for this ?”

“ That

“ That I, at least, was very much obliged to him.”

“ And am not I also ?”

“ Of that I cannot speak, unless I knew *his* motives of action : yours I am able to decide upon.”

“ What other than a liberal and disinterested spirit could possibly actuate him ?”

“ As if one could judge of a man’s motives whose character is wholly unknown. Ostentation, caprice, a thousand peculiarities occasion such strokes as this. Perhaps he wanted to purchase a friend.”—Colonel Raymond looked offended. “ Pardon me,” said Stanhope, extending his hand towards him, “ it does not necessarily follow that friends are to be purchased, because weak men go to the market in search of them.”—

The

The Colonel did not refuse his hand, but he was secretly displeased. The more easily so, as he had spoken unreservedly of his own concerns, in order to encourage a confidence that yet did not promise to be mutual. He communicated his feelings to his wife: but the character of Madame de T— was formed of still more indulgent materials than that of her husband.

“ We must have patience,” said she, gaily. “ Mr. Stanhope, it is evident, is chagrined and disappointed. He appears therefore severe, acrimonious, unbending. These are the marking features of his understanding, and it is by that you have judged him. My calculations of his character are drawn from his heart: which most contributes to decide the fate of the man I leave the sages of the world to determine. For my own part, my opinion is fixed. Our new acquaintance, like an

animal shut up in an exhausted receiver, has panted and gasped almost to death: but do not despair, for he is not quite gone! let us supply him an atmosphere, and the creature will live. I think too, I know the atmosphere that will revive him. Nature is in her beauty:—we will try her influence to-morrow.”

It was the season of harvest. Angelique, adorned with garlands of wild flowers, thrown over her by the rustics, and crowned like a youthful Ceres, presided at the rural festival that closed it. She mingled with the dancers, while the elder peasants of the neighbourhood, and those more immediately employed by Rivaz, assembled in crowds round the kind-hearted old man, and his respectable wife. A thousand demonstrations of regard were interchanged in the circle, and the air was filled with the soft murmur of happy and
social

social life. Stanhope was deeply sensible of its influence.

“ Ah, this is indeed genuine cordiality and attachment !” exclaimed he, as with Madame de T— and her husband he stood a distant spectator of the joyous scene. “ I too may flatter myself that I have such friends at home !” The Colonel could not help smiling ; for while this burst of general philanthropy escaped from his lips, his looks were fixed solely upon the lovely girl who presided at the festival ; and that with an expression that could not be misunderstood.

“ Do you then keep a seraglio of them ?” said he, very gravely.—“ Nay, never start, my dear Stanhope ! your eyes could not be better directed than towards Angelique.”

“ Angelique did not engross my thoughts.”

“ I spoke only of your eyes: but pray of which sex are these friends, capable of extorting that title from such a stoic as yourself?”

“ Come with me, and judge whether or no they deserve it. I must return home within a very few days: an indispensable duty calls me thither.—*Duty*, did I say?”—and he paused,—“ let me term it inclination: be my companion, and I shall quickly convince you that I am no stoic.”

“ I am perfectly convinced of that, without stirring a single step from hence, my good friend: but let us strike a balance of pleasure; you are obliged to return home; the journey, from your account of it, promises me a view of some parts of the country too

wild and dangerous to be explored with a female companion. I will be your fellow-traveller, if you will engage that your stay shall not exceed a limited time: I may afterwards call upon you to be mine."

The arrangement was made in a very few days. Colonel Raymond had not seen the glaciers that lay within their intended track, and, as his residence at Leuk was now drawing to a close, he was willing to complete his view of Switzerland. It was his intention to pass from thence to Florence, in order to visit the relation and benefactor to whose liberality of spirit he stood so much indebted: after which his professional duties recalled him to England. To England, Mr. Stanhope also declared his intention of going: but whether the intimacy now subsisting between them, was to be prolonged beyond the usual date of accidental acquaintance, it remained with

circumstances to decide; or rather, it remained with Mr. Stanhope himself; who could not reasonably expect its duration, if he continued to preserve that mysterious silence which left his past conduct and character in total obscurity. In proportion, however, as the day fixed for his departure approached, he grew more thoughtful and serious. It seemed as if the charms of that home of which he boasted were hourly less attractive. He courted the regard of Madame de T— with an assiduity which he had never before shewn, and for which she could not account. How indeed was it possible she could calculate the aim he proposed to himself in thus deviating from the habits of his character! he did *not* court Angelique; but there was an eloquence in his silence, even in his reserve, where she was concerned, no less moving or convincing than words would have been.

“ We

“ We shall civilise him, I perceive,” said Madame de T—, “ but it will be a work of time. In the interim, he is throwing his own happiness to a distance, and wounding a tender bosom. Angelique, I am persuaded, is afflicted at his approaching departure. She sheds tears in private. If I believed him capable of reading her heart, and of trifling with it, I should hate him.”

“ Of such a trespass he may safely be acquitted. A heart like Angelique’s is of all others that which he is least likely to understand. Extravagant passions, and corrupt tastes, if not principles, form, to him, the picture of the human race. He is yet to learn the softer shades of the mind; and to see how duties, affections, and decorum, blend together in the habits of what he calls sophisticated life; and though they take something from the force

of the character, bestow at least an equivalent in preserving its equilibrium. Angeli-que will never display the best qualities of hers, much less its tenderness, unless both are called forth by unlooked-for scenes. Her manners are tranquil and unpretending, and her character is only to be found in her heart. I am not convinced that he will have judgment enough to seek it there. But the ancients raised altars to good fortune, and your charming friend must, I fear, do the same thing, if *she* hopes to make him a proselyte to the sincerity of love, or we to that of friendship: but let us first be convinced that he is worth the trouble of converting."

On this subject the Colonel began secretly to entertain some very strong doubts. The continued reserve of his new friend surprised and offended him. He had himself gone great lengths to invite confidence,

confidence, and to see it thus obstinately withheld, induced suspicions with regard to the life and connections of Mr. Stanhope, which it was absolutely necessary should be removed, before intimacy could be carried further between them. It had begun in favourable circumstances; it had been assiduously cultivated by a man who evidently shunned society at large: from what motives he sought it in this particular instance remained therefore to be discovered. Not mercenary ones, it was plain: yet on this single testimony rested all that the Colonel could ascertain to be truly estimable in his character. It was no little argument in favour of its agreeableness, that, under such disadvantages, he should have conciliated a portion of regard from every individual of the circle in which he lived. But there was a grace in the negligence of his manner, a charm even in the faults of his understanding, which it

was impossible wholly to define or resist : somewhat that awakened all the higher tones of mind in those around, and gave an interest to common events and topics that is very rarely created by them. Colonel Raymond, however, was not to learn that advantages of this kind are often found to be, of all others, most deceitful :—and he would have been inexcusable to himself, had he carried to any unusual length his interest for a man whose habits of thinking were so likely to have tainted his heart. In the persuasion of obtaining every necessary information that should justify intimacy, the Colonel had not long before mentioned the plan of his intended journey to Florence ; as well as the particulars of his subsequent route to England ; and indirectly placed it within Mr. Stanhope's choice to accompany him to both, or either place.

“ And

“ And wherefore,” said the latter, who did not by any means approve of the delay, “ should your journey be thus retarded? will not the friend you are going to see be more surely your friend when at a distance from you? and why should you place yourself in the power of a benefactor? benefactors are dangerous people. Are you certain that he will not in some way shackle you by means of the obligations which you conceive him to have conferred? Be assured that this is a work of supererogation on your part which will answer no good purpose. Men are best situated when they know not each other intimately.”

“ That is, when they can deceive, without giving us a right to reproach them: for such is the common privilege of superficial acquaintance. A qualifying doctrine for cold hearts!—was yours of that number
when

when your countenance kindled at a mere intentional kindness on my part?"

"I was taken by surprise," replied Stanhope, with embarrassment.

"It is necessary then to surprise you into your best feelings: but let us have done reasoning each other out of them. I can sympathise with disappointment, my dear Stanhope; it is a blight: but beware of a canker! eternal distrust is neither manly nor honorable." Other company intervened and the conversation concluded. Subsequent recollection was not calculated, however, to produce reliance on him who supported it, and it was, therefore, under a mingled impression of distrust and curiosity that the Colonel had consented to the expedition, which the two gentlemen were on the point of undertaking together: but

Stanhope

Stanhope had spoken of *claims* that called him home. A word often contains a volume : and a single monosyllable, dropt by accident, had informed Colonel Raymond that a female was concerned in those claims. He did not communicate his surmises to his wife : it was enough that he would soon have the opportunity of ascertaining their truth : and on the particulars which this opportunity should develope, rested all his future determinations with respect to Mr. Stanhope.

Chance sometimes produces more than is effected by our deepest laid plans. The Colonel had occasion to ride to Sion. He resolved on this late in the evening, set out at day-break, and was not many hours absent : yet, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, he became apprised in that short space of time of all that related to Stanhope.

Stanhope. His disappointments, his pretensions, his probable views : every thing, in short, that was necessary to be known in order to decide his own conduct respecting him ; nor had he the smallest scruple left in becoming for the future his most intimate associate and friend. Plans still more liberal and enlarged passed through his imagination, but they yet rested there. The secret of the female companion was the only one he now had to learn, and till that could be developed he judged it most prudent to confine to his own bosom the knowledge he had so lately acquired. He was therefore impatient to depart ; and although it was evident that his friend, whatever the claims that called him away, was still disposed to loiter, they set out within four days from that period.

It was the first time that Madame de T—

had parted with her husband from the hour he became such ; and, in truth, she secretly prayed that it might be the last.

“ This, my dear Angelique, is a terrible experiment,” said she, in a half whisper, “ but it must be gone through with. The hearts of men differ strangely from ours ! I could live in his eyes, but his I perceive must wander over other objects if I would have them always meet mine with delight.”

“ Yet you resolved unreluctantly.”

“ Oh, no—not unreluctantly !—a tender woman must suffer when she misses the society of her husband—but a wise one, methinks, would desire that he should sometimes miss hers.—Go then,” she added, turning to the Colonel and gaily raising her voice, “ go and reconnoitre the manner in which our philosopher lives,
not

not wholly unlike that of Robinson Crusoe; if I may judge by his hints. Gun—fur cap and all!—follow him, then, honest Friday! I think your brother savages in that part of the world will not eat *you*, and we have only to hope that a hard frost will not lock you up, and oblige you to eat them.”

The evening of the first day lodged the travellers at the small village of M., within the Canton of Berne: where they were received by a respectable ecclesiastic with characteristic hospitality. He was a man of a dignified and interesting appearance, somewhat advanced in life, but intelligent and well-educated: who, after spending several years as tutor in a family whose chateau extended its domains as far as to his own small habitation, had retired to the latter in order to finish his career. The second day's journey presented a
wilder

wilder scene. At a certain station they met two peasants previously appointed by Mr. Stanhope, who brought several necessary articles of provision, besides garments lined with warm furs ; together with crampons and poles for passing over the smooth ice, or leaping the chafms.

“ If you are an adventurous traveller,” said Stanhope, “ these will be useful. We will, in that case, dismiss our horses, and trust only to ourselves. If otherwise, I can lead you by a road, less wild indeed, yet rich in natural beauties ; where, from different points you may safely see much of what the other would present you.” It is needless to say which path the Colonel preferred ; but it may be charitable to suppose that he did not repent it, even when he saw his companion tottering on the brink of a precipice, or, by personal agility, passing clefts, where the smallest

failure would have been certain destruction. While the river (the devious course of which they frequently pursued) sometimes rushed in cataracts that half stunned them ; and sweeping away every thing that approached to vegetation, presented a wild chaos of rock and water. At others, overshadowed by forests of pine, it was visible only from the foam that dashed through their dark branches. Alps piled on alps apparently bounded their course as they proceeded ; till, silently reposing in the bosom of solitude and winter, immense glaciers seemed to form the central station of both.

The shadows of the third day were lengthening, when, in consequence of a new direction which they had taken, the country insensibly became less savage. Little cottages were occasionally sprinkled in the hollows of the mountains ; and the faint

tinkle of the sheep-bell announced traces of civilization. Mr. Stanhope quickened his pace as he approached a spot, where, at the opening of a small and sheltered valley, he cast his eyes eagerly forward. Those of Colonel Raymond followed them, and rested upon a low but spacious building, which, fenced by its situation from the keener blasts of winter, yet, by its well-thatched roof and solid sides, denoted the necessity of providing against them. A loud whistle from Mr. Stanhope brought out at the same moment a very fine dog, which springing towards him, announced by the most extravagant caresses the joy that his master's return had created. The Colonel entered his friend's habitation with curiosity and surprise. The light was still strong upon the mountains, but mists were creeping over the valley ; and the blaze of a large wood-fire, that spread its social light through a well-furnished apartment, in-

spired that exquisite sense of comfort which is only known in winter. For winter the feelings of both parties determined it to be, in spite of the calendar. Stanhope quitted his guest for a moment; but presently returning,

“ I am too soon,” said he, “ my household is not yet assembled.” While he was speaking, the low note of a shepherd’s pipe was heard from the mountains.—“ They are approaching,” he added; “ come and see my family.”

The Colonel instantly followed to the kitchen, where, at the further end, near the fire, sat a young woman peeling hemp. She wore a corset, the short waist and petticoats of her country, and her hair twisted up with a silver bodkin. On a sort of rug, not far distant, lay two little sturdy mountaineers; one, to appearance, about four,
the

the other, perhaps, five years of age. Whose ruddy cheeks, and curling locks, were half hid, as, weary with the sports of the day, they lay twined in each other's arms. While across them, not less weary with his joy, the dog stretched his nose with social familiarity.

"Are these *all* yours?" said the Colonel, pointing with a smile to the group.

"Arlette will tell you," replied Stanhope;—"Arlette understands a little English." The Colonel felt reproved; for he had spoken in that tongue on the supposition that she would not comprehend it: but Arlette either did not hear, or did not attend to him; for with eyes earnestly fixed upon her benefactor, as on a superior being, she seemed sensible of nothing but the delight of seeing him again. The strain of music, which in the interim had grown

stronger, now suddenly ceased : and into a spacious and low apartment beyond the kitchen, where long tables were spread, and the hearths heaped up with fuel, poured a promiscuous train of peasants to their evening meal. Stanhope suddenly advanced amongst them : when, as if touched with electricity, the whole group burst at once into a hum of joy and congratulation. The children familiarly advanced to kiss his hand and stroke his coat. A more respectful sense of pleasure was announced in the countenances of the young men ; while still stronger tokens of it flowed down the furrowed and silvery cheeks of the old. Age seldom weeps for sorrow ; it is the stronger joy that calls forth its tears,

“ You have indeed friends, and I perceive that you deserve to have them,” said the Colonel, moved by the scene before him. “ Why, dear Stanhope, do you quarrel

rel

rel with a world which owes you so much?" Unwilling to appear an obtrusive observer, he then passed to the inner apartment; where, after considering with deeper interest than he had before felt, the character and conduct of his companion, curiosity once more revived on the subject of the female inmate whom he yet was to see. None such had been hitherto visible, except Arlette. Although young, she was not remarkably handsome, and the manners of Stanhope towards her produced internal conviction that she was no way particularly interesting to him. Her husband, a sun-burnt, but well-looking peasant, had also formed one of the group: Arlette could not, therefore, be the hidden fair one that had attached a man of Mr. Stanhope's education and fastidious habits. While he was yet agitating the point with himself, Stanhope appeared.

“Are you converted?” said he, with a smile, as he entered. “Do you not approve of the exchange I have made from more elegant society to that of these rustics, whose attachment to me is at once genuine and warm; whose manners bespeak the uprightness and candour of their lives, and on whom I may safely rely at every period of mine?”

“I see much to approve, and much even to admire,” replied the Colonel, who did not at that juncture feel himself disposed to enter more deeply into the subject; “but I am mistaken, or you have not yet shewn me *all* that is admirable here.”

“No!—but you shall see her immediately.”—He then took a light and passed on to another end of the house, where, stopping at an outward apartment, he laid his finger on his lips in token of silence,
and

and invited the Colonel softly to advance. The latter impatiently looked into the adjoining room, which was spacious and neat. In a canopied recess stood a small bed with white fringe and furniture, and in it, lay, fast asleep, a lovely child of about six years of age. One ivory shoulder was almost bare, as the arm that belonged to it had been negligently stretched over the counterpane; the other arm, which was under her head, by communicating an unusual degree of warmth, had called up the richest and most lively carnation into the cheek that reposed on it.

“ This is a fairy Venus indeed !” exclaimed Raymond, with admiration and surprise; and looking nearer, he saw the miniature features of his friend.—“ What,” he added, “ can possibly induce you to keep her here ?”

“ I can

“ I can keep her here no longer. Yet for many months she has been my chief companion, and my only felicity. But I dare not expose a frame like hers to the piercing blasts of such a winter as we have to encounter here. Nothing, however, can be more healthful, vigorous, and sprightly, than she has hitherto been. Here are roses !”—Stooping he gently kissed her cheek, and as gently covered up the beautiful little shoulder.—“ Arlette,” he added, as they quitted the room together, “ is the best creature in the world. She is also a mother—and her care has been unremitting :—but her care alone will no longer suffice.”

“ Bring the sweet child away with you by all means.”

“ Whither ?—to whom ?” replied Stanhope, with some asperity.

“ To

“ To my wife—to Angelique,”

“ Madame de T— will have other cares to engage her—and Angelique”—he faintly coloured as he pronounced the name.—
“ Angelique cannot be a mother to her.”

“ I am not sure of that, unless you are determined to the contrary.”

“ No, no : Angelique has no tenderness : she does not know how to love.”

“ Oh, you are further gone yourself than I suspected you to be, if you have already arraigned her for that crime. Come, do not be affected, dear Stanhope ! leave that sort of stuff for the world you have fallen out with. You cannot be ignorant that Angelique only waits to know that she is beloved, in order to bestow her heart.

“ Waits

“ Waits to know that she is beloved !” repeated Mr. Stanhope, acrimoniously. “ Is it thus that hearts are bestowed ?”

“ Yes, my good friend, it is thus that the heart of an amiable and well-educated young woman is—nay, *entre nous*—I think, *ought* to be bestowed. You have accustomed yourself to think otherwise. You have possibly, at your outset in life, encountered some Heloïse, who has broken a thousand obstacles to throw herself into your arms ; and, ten to one, as many more to free herself from them. You have believed that the world has seduced her ; and you have not seen, that she did not know how, in any instance, to contend with herself. If you are resolved to persist in this dream of the imagination and the senses, I have nothing more to say : but if you are in search of permanent happiness, you will find it associated with gentleness,

with modesty, with self-distrust: in a word, with that sort of character which the high-flyers of romance, as well as those of ton, who often mean nearly the same thing under a different name, will perhaps chuse to depreciate by the term mediocrity.—Angelique's," he carelessly added, "is, I rather believe, of this description.—It may be best therefore to think of her no more."

"I see nothing that should prevent my continuing to do so, in what you have announced," returned Stanhope, a little peevishly, and without perceiving the good-natured malice that had dictated the last sentence.

"Guilty, decidedly, my dear friend, by your own confession," said the Colonel, laughing: "and since that is the case, *continue* to think of her in any way you like,

like,—it will come to the same thing in the end.”

“ I had very different plans when I left ——that is, when I returned this second time to Leuk,” said Stanhope. “ I had banished all ideas of the kind, and had resolved never to marry.”

“ Then no man living is so well entitled as myself to tell you that you made a very foolish resolution.”

“ I might perhaps convince *you*, sooner than any other man living, to the contrary, were I to try.”

“ Then pray forbear the experiment ! my wife will not thank you for it : besides, we have not the knack of convincing one another ; it would therefore be so much time lost. Make your determination at
once.

once. Return to Leuk: take your little girl with you; and if your heart is so inclined, try whether Angelique can be taught how to love. Remember that it is I who advise this, and who am willing to stand by all the ill consequences that may arise from it."

"I *shall* remember;" said Stanhope, musing: "but I am so savage—so unaccommodating—so little likely now to inspire affection."—

"You want me to tell you that the girl is distractedly in love with you. I shall affirm no such thing: for, in the first place, I do not believe it." Mr. Stanhope defended himself very gravely from this accusation. His friend laughed at his earnestness, and denied the love altogether on the part of Angelique: but unwilling to check a bias that became every moment

more

more apparent, he took care to throw in many little particulars respecting her, that spoke more in its favour than his assertions made against it: not failing to repeat, however, that the observations he communicated were merely his own, unsupported by those of his wife. But he could hardly forbear smiling, on penetrating into the secret pleasure which Stanhope felt in disbelieving him. The conversation ran into length, till the Colonel was finally obliged to break it off.

“My dear Stanhope,” said he, “it is very plain that you *are* in love, and that I am not; for I am terribly sleepy. Remember how many miles we have travelled to-day: and *what* miles! give me a candle, therefore, and shew me my chamber, if you do not mean that I should disgrace myself.” Never did Colonel Raymond enjoy better rest than on that night. A sense of self-approbation,

approbation, which he was well entitled to indulge, united with real fatigue to lull both body and mind into the most refreshing sleep. He opened his eyes upon a bright morning sun, which fell in strong lights and shades over a country of various and exquisite beauty. Stanhope was already abroad, and his friend sallied forth in search of him; but, being wholly unacquainted with his haunts, their meeting was not very probable: nor was the Colonel impatient that it should take place. He had himself some points to consider, in order that he might perform to his own satisfaction the part he had undertaken in the little romance of the day. It was one which, however accordant with his character, required caution and address: nor was it therefore without previous consideration, although veiled under the appearance of gaiety, that he endeavoured to contrast the passion which he well

knew had marked the early part of Mr. Stanhope's life, with that which there was reason to believe would fill up the remainder of it. The particulars of that life the Colonel was sufficiently acquainted with, though a long and professional absence from England had prevented his observations from being personal: it was indeed the common history of thousands of men, born, like Mr. Stanhope, with advantages that enable them to chuse their own fate. Deceived by his mistress—betrayed by his friend—duped alternately in his progress through life by violent passions, and refined tastes, he had run a tumultuous career, in which nothing indeed had been dishonourable, but all had been vapid and disappointing. He had revenged himself, as men of honour too often do, upon those who have none; and after wounding his antagonist so dangerously as to be obliged, to quit his country, and find temporary
obscu-

obscurity in another, he had resolved, in a fit of spleen, to return thither no more. The fact was, that Mr. Stanhope had attained that period of life at which man first begins to discover the limit of his own views and his own powers. A period when minds of strong imagination, and sanguine hopes, as often quarrel with themselves as with the world: and he had quarrelled with both, merely because he knew not how to circumscribe his expectations from either. In quitting it, he carried away with him no consoling reflections: for the child, whom he doated upon, he could not legitimate; nor did he know where to find a female protector or friend, that should shelter her from dangers, which his own dear-bought knowledge of life taught him to calculate, with even exaggerated apprehension. A plan had indeed occurred to him with regard to Madame de T—; which he now was no longer eager to

realise. All that related to Angelique, even when his own election was made, it still remained with her to decide upon; and the distrust he had long cherished, both of himself and of others, caused the interval to be filled with a thousand disquieting and impatient feelings. Having lived in the land of shadows, he had learned to suspect that friendship and love were nothing else; and he felt, that were he to grasp at them a second time, and find them only such, the disappointment would be irremediable.

Colonel Raymond had, however, by no means calculated the extent of his friend's partiality for Angelique. That was now so completely ascertained, by the conversation of the preceding evening, as left little more room for discovery. The engines then were in his hands, that might bring back a valuable heart to society; and the

the generosity of his own induced him to resolve upon using them. Stanhope, when in solitude, or rather *tête-à-tête*, with a man whom, spite of prejudice, he began greatly to esteem, was a very different being from that which he appeared to superficial observers, and infinitely more amiable. He was passionately fond of his little girl, and the wish he felt that she should create fondness in the hearts of those to whom he was about to present her, was a sufficient attestation of the warmth of his own, and of the interest he took in both parties. It seemed difficult to arrange in what manner she could be made their fellow-traveller; but Stanhope was perfectly familiar with every mode of conveyance; and his little mountaineer, as he called her, was active and adventurous. Never could heroine of any age or country boast two more vigilant Knights to protect her, and never did heroine reward her protectors

by more playful and fascinating gaiety. The parting with Arlette, and the little boys, was nevertheless a sorrowful scene,—nor was the dog forgotten. She kissed them all affectionately by turns, and it would have been difficult to say which of the three had most of her fondness or caresses. To Arlette, and her husband, together with the parents of the former, was consigned the numerous family to whom Stanhope was in the habit of extending his protection. It was not without a kind and sympathetic emotion that he recollected the indefinite time for which he now left them, or weighed how far his new pursuits might estrange him from that mode of life, which he had endeavoured to persuade himself alone was rationally desirable. But his child, and yet another object, almost, he thought, as dear as his child, for he was far from granting, even to his own heart, that Angelique could

possibly divide it with the latter, called him to other scenes.

They now passed through a circuitous road, less gratifying indeed to the imagination, than that savage one they had before travelled, but infinitely more delightful to the heart. Innocent and happy Nature seemed to present herself to their view in every valley, and in every cottage: nor did Stanhope fail to comment with enthusiasm upon it. As they approached that limit which lay within the jurisdiction of Berne, the appearance of things nevertheless seemed insensibly to change. They met several peasants, chiefly women, who had all of them an air of hurry and apprehension for which the travellers could not immediately account. But, in proportion as they advanced, they gathered intelligence, that within different quarters of the Canton, various petty tumults had arisen,

in consequence, as it was supposed, of the intrigues of French emissaries: that some hamlets had been burned by the opposite factions that inhabited them; and several individuals had been obliged to hide themselves from popular fury. Intelligence of this nature could not but excite emotion in bosoms that glowed with the love of liberty, of nature, and of virtue. It was so delightful to every generous mind, to believe that there existed a spot on the globe where those blessings remained inviolate, that, had the persuasion been simply a dream of the imagination, it would have been impossible to awake from it without reluctance and resentment!

Consideration for their young companion rendered both gentlemen impatient to reach a destination that should secure them from alarm. How greatly were they grieved and surprised, to find that they
rather

rather seemed to have penetrated into the chief scene of the commotion, when they reached the village of M. which had been their first night's station after leaving Leuk. All was indeed now tranquillised; but the stillness that had succeeded was of that frightful kind, that both in individuals and in societies seems the consequence of crime, and bespeaks the consciousness of it. The inhabitants that remained upon the spot kept within their doors; but many had quitted it; and among the houses that were deserted, was that of their former kind host. A respectable woman who lived in the cottage adjoining, answered however to their interrogatories concerning him: and they gathered from her account, that if he had escaped in safety, a circumstance which appeared extremely doubtful, he had been obliged to purchase security by abandoning every thing he possessed. His home had

been nearly demolished ; his books, which were almost his sole wealth, lay scattered over the desolate apartments, torn and half burned ; and the furniture had been pilaged or destroyed.

“ He was, no doubt, particularly odious in the neighbourhood,” said Stanhope.

“ No, not he, Sir, but he was suspected to be of the same party with the great family *there* ;” and she pointed to the Chateau : “ they were not on the spot to guard their own property, and he endeavoured to dissuade the peasants from destroying it.—But all would not do,—for they only committed more mischief here.”

“ But was he not severe ?—Aristocratic ? unkind to them ?”

“ Never

“ Never that I heard of. I have seen him with my own eyes making pottage and soups for them, when times were hard : and he would visit the poorest man in the district that sent to him.—He could not be bountiful, for he was not rich :—but he had such a good heart, Sir !”—and tears filled her eyes.

“ Hateful villains !” exclaimed Stanhope, with an indignation which he could not controul.

“ No, indeed, Sir, they were no villains,” returned the woman, with the same warmth on her side ; “ they were the most honest people alive, and till this unlucky fray they were the most kind-hearted. But they were ignorant ;—and when people are very ignorant it is easy for wicked men to persuade them that the wrong is the right. There is but little reliance, I am afraid, to be

be placed on those who do not understand their duties.—It is all right with such folks till it is all wrong : and then they are as zealous in the bad cause as in the good.” Colonel Raymond looked at his friend, who on his part evidently made his own applications, but no comment.

As it was impossible to proceed to Leuk the same night, they were obliged to put up with such accommodation as the village afforded ; and on the evening of the ensuing day they found themselves within view of the Colonel’s habitation. It had been agreed between the two friends that the little girl and Mr. Stanhope should for a short time become the guests of Madame de T— ; there seemed an impropriety in introducing the child at once, and without explanation, into the family of Monsieur Rivaz ; and something too marked in separating her from her father, even if that
could

could have been done without afflicting her, which did not seem probable, for she loved him most fondly.

“ You had better not venture into the house, I think,” said the Colonel, turning with a smile to Stanhope as they approached the garden gate. “ Do you not hear music ?”

“ It was once like the memory of joys that were past,” returned the other. “ I am now disposed to look only to the future.” Whatever might be the disposition of Mr. Stanhope’s mind, he certainly nevertheless felt a little embarrassed, though too proud to shew that he did so. He was going to appear in two characters equally new to him, those of a lover and a father: he knew not what persons composed the audience that was to witness this unexpected exhibition; but he felt as if there was
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but one pair of eyes in the world that he would willingly at that crisis have encountered. Fortunately the saloon was shaded to a most convenient obscurity; and though several people were in it, it was not easy to distinguish them individually. His ear, however, had informed him, when yet afar off, that Angelique was one of the number, for she had been singing; and, obscure as the light was, he contrived to see her as quickly as though they had met in the brightest sunshine.

“ I bring you back, my dear Augusta,” said the Colonel, as he tenderly embraced his wife, “ two guests—this sweet child, and her father.” And he held up the former to her arms, giving at the same time her hand to Stanhope, who, kissing it, uttered some confused, half inarticulate sentence on the subject of his child. Whatever part of the company rejoiced at that moment in
the

the obscurity, Madame de T— assuredly was not of the number. Her sprightly and inquiring eyes, which were turned with astonishment upon the trio, seemed to ask a thousand questions, and make a thousand observations: but her native delicacy as instantly conquered the impulse, and she suffered the various salutations and greetings attending the occasion, to be entirely over, before she called for lights. Mr. Stanhope in the interim recovered his presence of mind, which the Colonel's sudden and unequivocal explanation had somewhat disturbed. Angelique too found her voice; and both of them had proceeded so far in conversation as to make civil inquiries concerning each other. The rest of the company, which was composed of Rivaz, his wife, and a very handsome young man who was lately come from Berne, talked with interest of the various political occurrences that had lately taken place there,

and

and the probability of its being entered by the troops of France. Madame de T— meantime was employed in careffing and examining the features of the child, who on her part was no less busy in examining those of the company. Children are always decided on the article of physiognomy ; and Stanhope's little girl seemed to have a very sympathetic taste with that of her father, for she presently made her decision in favour of Angelique, whose soft and persuasive glances won her over from the sprightly graces of the Countess. It was in Angelique's arms that she chose to sit ; and twining her own little snowy ones round the neck of the latter, she whispered a thousand confidential and important nothings ; pressing her hand upon the lips of Mademoiselle Rivaz, or stopping her mouth with kisses, if she attempted to repeat one of them.

“ How

“How indulgent you are to a motherless child,” said Mr. Stanhope, drawing near to both. Angelique half raised her eyes, and a soft flush came over her cheek, which seemed to announce that the indirect information which the sentence was meant to convey, was not wholly uninteresting; but neither of them spoke further. Mr. Stanhope only gently released her, after a time, from the child, who he feared was become troublesome; and taking the latter in his own arms, kept her there for the remainder of the evening.

Yet this evening of long anticipated pleasure did not pass without alloy. The visitor who during the absence of the two friends had been introduced into the domestic circle, seemed to receive a very particular sort of attention from Rivaz, and his wife: nor was Angelique remiss in hers. She listened to him whenever he

spoke with a degree of complacency, which though it might be meant to convey nothing but friendship, yet gave Mr. Stanhope a new and very disagreeable sensation. The young man, on his part, was full of respect and devotion to the family. He was musical; could sing well, and was privileged by that talent to exercise a thousand little gallantries. He filled up the measure of his offences by officiously placing himself, like one who was accustomed so to do, next Mademoiselle Rivaz at the supper table; and when her father on taking leave, drew his wife's arm under his own, and thus committed his daughter to the care of the stranger, Mr. Stanhope fairly wished himself again in his cottage and his solitude.

The party had hardly dispersed, and Stanhope, too much spleen'd for conversation, withdrawn, when the Colonel, whose obser-

observations had also been alive, began to interrogate his wife concerning her new acquaintance.

“ I hardly know any thing of him,” replied she, “ except his name: but his manners though a little Swiss, are lively and agreeable. He seemed to drop from the clouds within a day or two after your departure. The whole family of Rivaz are extremely confidential with him, and since the time of his arrival have been much less domesticated with me than they were before accustomed to be. If I did not rely on the heart of Angelique I should certainly suspect that some treaty is negotiating in which she is concerned.”

“ Would it not be possible to question her ?”

“ Very possible—but that I have done it already to no purpose. “ It is my father’s secret,” was her answer.”

“ Then I will question Rivaz.—He is plain and straight forward. We shall therefore easily come at the truth. Stanhope is of a character either to controul himself entirely, or not at all.—If he suspects either indifference or finesse he will fly off in a tangent, and we may hear of him next from the North Cape.—I can see that he is already anxious—irresolute—distrustful.”

“ Bad characteristics !”

“ Unlucky ones I confess: though common enough with a certain inconsiderate race of men, who have purchased, at the expence of fortune and time, a power to
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taint their own happiness.—But our friend has valuable qualities and I owe it to myself to serve him.”

The Colonel's intended application to Rivaz was judicious-enough, but unfortunately made too late; for the latter had risen with the sun the next morning, and set off for Berne upon business. His young acquaintance seemed also to have absented himself for the day, and Angelique with her mother remained at home. Stanhope and his little girl passed the greater part of the morning in their society. Contrary to the usual habits of all, he alone was animated and unembarrassed, was even pointed in his attentions. The disappearance of the stranger had revived his spirits as well as his hopes, and he strove by a thousand indirect marks of tenderness, by the softest words and blandishments, to establish, through the medium of the child, a sort

of intercourse between himself and Angelique. No man knew how to do this more gracefully, nor was it the first time that an infant messenger had been the interpreter of love.

Madame Rivaz seemed during this scene to be restless and out of humor. She spoke frequently to her daughter with a certain abruptness which denoted secret displeasure, and even made allusions the tendency of which Stanhope could not comprehend. But Angelique, as if awakened to sudden recollection by them, quitted the room more than once, in order as it appeared to attend to some domestic occupation. She frequently returned, however, and Stanhope believed he could discern, that whatever were the duties which called her away, it was her heart that as constantly brought her back. "But that heart is so cold!—so tame!—its whispers are so *very* gentle," said

said he to himself, "that, how can I be sure they will always be heard?" During the intervals of her absence he was half tempted to be explicit with Madame Rivaz. But the good Lady's countenance did not encourage him. He knew her character to be warm, and her partialities or prejudices equally invincible. He had once enjoyed the first in all its extent; but she was a rigid observer of propriety, and he fancied that she did not survey the child with indulgence. A consciousness that he was not willing to investigate, taught him at least to distrust her.

"I have tired you," said he, rising at length to be gone. "My visit has been unreasonably long: but this house seems my natural residence"—and he looked at Madame Rivaz. No invitation, however, succeeded the hint.—"It is the only place in

which my heart finds its home." Angelique half bowed, for it was to her he particularly directed the second sentence: but no further notice was taken by either.—"We see you this evening," he added, still addressing himself to the latter.

"I fear not," returned she, blushing and faltering.—"I have an engagement—I am indispenfibly obliged to be at home."

"And may I not then be permitted to join the family party for half an hour?"

"Not to-night."—

"To-morrow, then: ——— to-morrow morning," returned he, thrown wholly off his reserves by surprise and vexation.

"I am

“ I am not my own mistress of a morning,” replied Angelique: and she looked at her mother.

“ My husband is gone to settle some particular business at Berne,” said Madame Rivaz. “ When he returns, every thing will perhaps be arranged, and we shall be at leisure to receive our friends.” Petrified with astonishment at this sort of dismissal, so unexpected and so new to him, Stanhope took his leave.—“ No, Angelique,” said he to himself, as he walked home, “ it must be to-night that we meet: to-night that our mutual destiny, as far as that of either depends on the other, must be decided!—*Every thing will be arranged!*—What detestable words, and uttered with so much *sang froid!*—and I am dismissed as an intruder before this arrangement takes place. Some mysterious negotiation is evidently on foot, which Angelique’s

lique's heart does not sanction, whatever may be the dictates of duty: if I do not therefore explain myself to-night, to-morrow will perhaps be too late."

He returned to Madame de T—, absent and thoughtful, but too resolute in his own purpose to desire any counsel from others. The change in his appearance was observed both by the Colonel and herself.

"Our philosopher is become a very lover," said she, "Is it happiness or disappointment that occasions his reserve? I do not understand it enough to determine: but let us ask him no questions; confidence will come in due season: he has spent half the day with Angelique, and I shall have it all from her in the evening." Evening came, but Angelique came not. "What can possibly have engaged her," exclaimed Madame de T—? "after dinner, I know she

she intended to be here." Stanhope, uttered some trifling reply, from which she understood that *he* did not expect her; the mystery appeared solved at once:—she *did* expect him then.

"Heaven grant that Angelique's passion may not prove of this dolorous kind," continued the countess, when he had vanished: "far from improving, it has totally spoiled him. What a splenetic husband shall we have, if the lover is thus gloomy!"—The gloom of this lover was nevertheless insensibly subsiding. He had, in a great degree, conquered the alarm and disappointment which for a moment had obscured his fairest hopes; and the persuasion he secretly cherished that Mademoiselle Rivaz was not indifferent to him, induced reveries of a pleasanter nature. It was the sweetest evening in the world when he directed his solitary walk towards

towards the habitation of Rivaz. The moon in full beauty chequered a close path-way, half covered with falling leaves, which were softly moved by a breeze that partook rather of summer than of autumn, while her more resplendent light struck at intervals through the branches, thus relieved from their exuberant foilage ; and the whole landscape, as well as the air, was full of a divine tranquillity. The lower windows of the house were thrown open, and the moonlight shewed him Angelique's work, together with various trifles belonging to her, on a small table in the room where they were accustomed to sit : but neither she nor her mother were there. Hardly doubting that they had walked out, as they frequently did, to enjoy the freshness of evening, he directed his steps down a shrubbery which was divided by a paling from the orchard ; the door of communication at the further end was open,

open, and he had advanced within two hundred paces of it, when a soft and musical voice struck his ear from the other side of the enclosure. His heart immediately acknowledged the sound, and he was quickening his steps, when they were arrested by another and far different tone. It was evidently that of a man; and although the words which he uttered were indistinctly heard, it was plain that he spoke in answer to her. It was equally plain that he spoke low and familiarly. Stanhope checked his own feelings.—It might be her father.—Even if he were not returned, and the young stranger from Berne her companion, her mother was probably with her. That supposition was at once proved erroneous, for two persons only appeared at the door of communication: they were arm in arm; and one of them was certainly Angelique, the other was not Rivaz, but a man of better stature and appearance,

though his features and figure were too indistinctly seen to be ascertained. While Stanhope stood still to contemplate them both, Angelique, on seeing or guessing at him, appeared to be startled. She hastily withdrew her arm, motioned to her companion to retire into the orchard, which was thickly tufted with trees, and locking the door upon him, advanced up the walk, where Stanhope remained by this time a statue of surprise and indignation.

“ I fear I have intruded,” cried he, hardly knowing what he said. Angelique seemed little less confounded than himself.

“ Did you not meet my mother,” returned she, as if desirous to evade his observation, “ I parted with her a very short time ago.”

“ You have parted since with another companion. Tell me, Angelique,” and he
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eagerly seized her hands, " what man was that who quitted you this moment ?"

" Ask—my father," replied she, blushing, and almost in tears at an address at once so abrupt and unequivocal.

" Your father is not here,—and even if he were, I should be little disposed to question him. It is you, dear Angelique, and your actions only that must decide my fate. Speak—tell me—if your own heart does not induce confidence, I shall never seek it elsewhere."

" Be assured that my actions," said Mademoiselle Rivaz, still abashed and trembling, " have the concurrence of my father,—nay more, are the consequence of his commands.—Why then should you question their propriety ?"

" I am

“ I am answered.—The concurrence of your father is then enough for your happiness; you feel no remorse for destroying mine. You part with me—and for ever—for I cannot part twice with any being that I love as I love you, Angelique.—You dismiss me without explanation or indulgence, simply because your conduct is sanctioned by your father.”—Angelique, insensible to what she did, detained him as he attempted to leave her.

“ What would you yourself say,” cried she, “ to a woman who should violate a serious engagement merely to indulge—” She stopped, overwhelmed with the consciousness of her own meaning.

“ That I loved—that I adored her,—that my life and my fortune were at her feet!”—and he threw himself there.

“ Will

“ Will nothing less than an immediate and unreserved confidence satisfy you?” replied she, with tremor and evident irresolution.

“ Nothing less will, dear Angelique,—nothing less can,” he replied, with the eagerness of invigorated hope. “ I should then owe it to your heart, and only to to that:—it is to that only I ever *will* owe it.”

“ Then relinquish the expectation of being satisfied,” said Angelique, after a pause, but with a voice that shewed she was in tears, “ for my heart cannot resolve on the acknowledgment you exact.—It cannot sacrifice its duties even to—its feelings:” and disengaging her hands, she ran from him in the greatest confusion, and passed with inconceivable rapidity into the

house. Agitated, but not satisfied, he followed her. She had retired however to her own apartment, and he threw himself into a chair near the work-table. "She will then be bestowed upon another," he exclaimed, "and it is plain that she is willing to be so bestowed, rather than sacrifice some insignificant duty to the immediate dictates of her heart.—But Rivaz has more judgment.—Rivaz"—While he spoke, his hand rested on somewhat which lay upon the table; and he perceived that it was the case of a picture. "No!—it is her heart that disposes of her," he resentfully added, on opening the miniature; and discovering a likeness of the young man he had seen with her the evening before—"and mine is the dupe, as it has been throughout my life, of its own sensibilities;—its own ridiculous and ill-supported confidence in others."

It was

It was long before he thought of returning to the house of his friend. A thousand confused schemes agitated his impetuous temper in the interim. Solitude,—seclusion—that hill which had “lifted him to the storms” of heaven indeed, but which seemed to have sheltered him from those of the world, again recurred to his recollection. But even seclusion had lost half its charms: cruelty and ingratitude were to be met with in rustic as well as polished life: error crept in, wherever man was to be found; and the only choice lay between the evils of grossness and refinement.

“Are you performing the part of Werter?” said Colonel Raymond, who, after long search, found him leaning, in a most pastoral attitude, under a spreading chestnut-tree that stood half-way between the two habitations. “What evil spirit possesses you now?”

“ The worst of all evil spirits—jealousy and resentment. Why did you persuade me to prove myself a fool ?”

“ First tell me, by which of your foolish actions the proof is established, before I stand condemned as an accessory.”—Stanhope, in few words, and not very distinctly, related what had passed between himself and Angelique.

“ This has been a most heroic scene indeed,” replied the Colonel,” “ and the probable *denouement* puts me in mind of some French riddles I have read ; where, after imagination has travelled up to the seventh heaven, and down as low in proportion, in search of the marvellous, *le Mot de l'Enigme* turns out to be a conjuror or a chimney-sweeper. My dear Stanhope, do you know that you have made yourself mighty ridiculous ?—Go,

and ask pardon of Angelique as fast as you can."

"For what offence?"

"That of having quarrelled with her because she was not romantic enough to give up a secret confided by her father, and betray the rites of hospitality, in order to indulge your freak of owing every thing to her heart. Be content, my good friend, for the future, to owe something to a woman's reason and her duties; or at least allow her to owe something to them herself; and trust me, you will be a gainer in the end by the exchange.—Hearts are fickle, and apt sometimes to turn deserters: but there is a sort of supplementary militia of minor virtues, which the best soldier amongst us will grant may be trained into use."

“ I do not understand any thing you are saying.”

“ Then understand it now. This rival, found guilty of being shut up in the house of Rivaz ;—nay, worse,—shut up in his orchard ;—with, or without Angeli-que,—no matter which ; is no less a personage than our *ci-devant* host, whose habitation was burnt at the village of M. The young stranger *was* his pupil, and is his most grateful and devoted protector. It is here that the good ecclesiastic himself, who is well known to Rivaz, sought a secret and temporary asylum from popular fury. It is here, that the young man came to seek and advise with him ; and, finally, it is from hence that Rivaz is now empowered by the Council of Berne to dismiss him safely, acquitted of all alleged misdemeanors, to its future protection. Are you satisfied now ? If not, I refer you

for a fuller explanation to Rivaz, who is just returned home, and has published the secret cause of his journey ; or what think you of applying to the old priest himself ? He will doubtless be much flattered by your jealousy ; and the least he can do to remove it, is to propose marrying you to Angelique, before she has time to discover more of your faults."

While the Colonel was speaking, a variety of interesting recollections passed through the mind of his hearer. Mademoiselle Rivaz had not indeed given him the testimony of love which he solicited ; but even while denying it, she had been betrayed into indirect but tender acknowledgments, that left him no longer any possibility of doubting his power over her affections.

“ Yet, by what plea,” said he, “ shall I induce her to listen to me again, till I have had the sanction of that respectable father to whose authority she herself has referred me! How insupportably tedious is the delay.—It includes too, explanations without end!”——

“ One of which, perhaps the *most* tedious, I will spare you. My dear Stanhope, (if it is still your pleasure to be so called) prepare for a surprise.—I am well informed that I now take by the hand my relation and my best friend. I know that you quitted Florence some months ago, and that you saved me the trouble of seeking *you* either there, or elsewhere, by seeking *me* here. I have gathered from your own broken sentences sufficient information concerning your plans to guess that you adopted this last with a view to the future
fate

fate and protection of your child ; and that unwilling to tax me by avowing yourself in the character of a mere benefactor, you were desirous to try me in that of a friend. You *have* tried me more deeply than you ever suspected ; and I hope, that by adopting the views most favourable to your happiness, I have proved myself both an honourable and a disinterested one."

" Do you deal in magic ?" said Stanhope, smiling in spite of his chagrin ; " how long since, and by what means did you obtain this information ?"

" Exactly four days before we set out for your habitation in the mountains. I had business at Sion which I thought it more convenient to settle in person than by writing. It happened that the banker with whom I transacted it, had been employed by you on your first journey here ; and
though

though cautioned with respect to your temporary change of name, yet imputing it solely to the account of the duel, he entertained not the least doubt that it was in private well-known to your nearest relation, and one who bore the same. I had presence of mind enough to conceal from him, that he had made any discovery, nor does he to this moment suspect his error. Admire my indulgence, for I also left you in full possession of yours, till the aim of our journey was completed. On my own part, as personal acquaintance was all that was wanting between us, in learning your name I had nothing more to learn. What say you now to my counterplot?" Stanhope smiled, and nodded approbation.

"Yet as it would be rather too much in the tone of romance," continued the Colonel, "to make this explanation to strangers, Rivaz may be suffered to suppose,

pose, for the present at least, that our knowledge of each other has always been mutual. Come and see my wife. She is now acquainted with the secret, which I only guarded long enough to satisfy myself that there was no hidden fair one in your solitude likely to chill your reception here." The lights of the Colonel's habitation, to which they had insensibly advanced, now glimmered through the trees. "Shew yourself," he added, "but tell your own story at your own season; you will find Rivaz and his friends with Madame de T—. Angelique too is most probably of the party. And although the little girl may not be present, to engross you both so conveniently as she did yesterday evening, you may nevertheless find an opportunity of making your peace."

Stan-

Stanhope impatiently entered the saloon, but Madamoiselle Rivaz was not there, and the apology her mother made for her deprived him of all hope that she would appear. In one of the guests he, with pleasure, recognised his kind host at M., nor did the young stranger, who, with filial respect accompanied the latter, now strike him in the same disadvantageous point of view he had hitherto done. But it was Angelique only that occupied his thoughts; and hardly had he sufficient self-command to stay a few moments, in order to offer those congratulations which the occasion demanded. The Colonel was not surprised to observe that he disappeared immediately afterwards; or to learn, on his return to the company, that Angelique, who entertained not the smallest suspicion of seeing him so suddenly again, had once more been found alone: that he had plead-

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ed his cause with no less earnestness, and better success than before, and obtained a full and kind pardon.

Stanhope found opportunity, in the course of the evening, to communicate to Monsieur Rivaz, in few words, the purport of a conversation which he requested might be granted him on the following day. The cheeks of the good man were suffused, and his eyes glistened with pleasure; he affectionately prest the hand of his future son-in-law, and, in so doing, left little more to explain between them.

“ But my former kind friend, Madame Rivaz, has looked coldly on me,” said Stanhope, returning with interest the friendly pressure—“ How am I to conciliate her favour ?”

“ My

“ My good, Sir, you have never lost it. It is Angelique and I that have been the culprits : on her part, poor girl, very innocently so : for she only obeyed my commands. I found her, however, in tears on my return, so guessed that all had not gone well at home. My wife,” he added in a whisper, “ is a little of a politician ; and studies the best part of politics—safety.—She conceived mine to be in some danger from the shelter I afforded our friends. Forgive a woman who loves her husband more than she does any thing else in the world.”

Stanhope was never better disposed to pardon that sort of offence ; and either the plea itself, or the consciousness that Madame Rivaz might be fairly acquitted of having caused the tears of her daughter, put him into so very good a humour that

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He must have been been hard-hearted indeed to have resisted his attentions. Nor was her heart composed of any stubborn materials whatever, where he was concerned ; in fact he possessed, in a very uncommon degree, the art of rendering himself agreeable to both sexes ; and especially to women, when he chose to exert it.

A period not remote was fixed for the celebration of the marriage ; but the contract, and the rural fête that accompanied the latter, were announced two days after. These ceremonies were customs of the country, and therefore willingly complied with, though not essential. The peasants of the district were invited to share the conviviality and joy of the occasion, nor were those of the mountain forgotten in the orders issued by Stanhope. Angelique, at his request, appeared in the same rustic garb which she had worn at the harvest-home,

home, and never before looked so charming, for she had never been so happy. The whole scene was like one of those delightful visions of Arcadian felicity so rarely found any where but in romance.

“And now,” said Madame de T— addressing herself gaily to the little group around her, but smiling particularly on Stanhope “having each played our separate parts, to our own satisfaction at least, and wound up our little *proverbe*, with the old-fashioned denouement of a wedding, suppose, my dear friends, that I undertake to deliver the finale of the piece.—Rochefoucault, I am afraid, has said before me, that mankind are neither so good nor so bad as we fancy them to be. Ignorance brutalizes, and refinement corrupts. Let us hope, however, that wise heads and generous hearts are still to be met with in every class of society : but while wandering
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in search of both, through the very odd mazes of this very odd world, it will be reasonable to recollect that we have no right to murmur at our disappointment, if we find that we cannot gather those flowers which the paths we have chosen never yet afforded.

THE
WIFE'S TALE.

“ A Creature, “ kind and generous,” fair and vain,
“ The Creature, Woman, rises now to reign.”

PARNELL.

“ I HAVE certainly taken a very judicious step this morning,” said Mr. Seymour to himself, as he drove through the neighbourhood of Hanover Square to his own house. “ Every thing that respects my worldly concerns is now exactly settled to my satisfaction; and, properly speaking, I may call this period the beginning of my life !”

life!"——So pleasant a train of reasoning could not fail to put him in good humour. The conclusion drawn was not perhaps altogether correct; for as Mr. Seymour bordered upon fifty, there might be people in the world ill-natured enough to think that life was somewhat nearer its sunset than its dawn: but who, in calculations of this kind ever is correct? And what person would think of setting a man right that was so happy in his error, and so disposed to make his friends happy? For Mr. Seymour was philanthropic enough to comprehend, under that title, a numerous circle composed of both sexes, to whom he gave the best dinners, the gayest balls, and the prettiest rural fêtes of any man in London.

He was yet engrossed by the agreeable contemplations we have mentioned, when the carriage stopped at the door of his own

house. It was a very elegant one, in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square. Curtains, and sofas of the rarest and most fashionable texture, were disposed with all the taste of modern improvement: a treillage inclosing the finest flowers perfumed the air from the windows, at one end; while virandas shaded the other, and only permitted the vulgar gazers of the street to peep at the rich tassels and fringes that decorated the apartments within. A dejeuner was displayed in the very first stile, and of the most magnificent china; while the plants from the conservatory made a little Eden of the spot. Mr. Seymour was every where, and the life of the company. He wore his best Brutus wig, which was curled in the last new taste. His coat was made to a charm. He had a tolerable leg, and it was not neglected. His teeth were hardly so good as they had been, but he had supplied himself with a couple

couple of new ones the week before, which enabled him to laugh with perfect security. He was therefore disposed to be entertaining to a degree. In fact he was altogether in very good humour with himself, for he had that morning made a purchase that pleased him extremely:—he had bought a wife.

Presiding, under the auspices of her mother, at this *dejeuné*, sat a young creature just turned of seventeen; lovely as one of the graces, and almost as little clothed. Her polished throat and beautiful arms, her drapery of white muslin, the ingenuous sweetness of her eyes, and the rich bloom of her cheek, which every moment as it passed tinted with a vermillion still richer, formed in themselves a picture so irresistible as to need no decoration. Yet it cannot be denied that there was somewhat in the general *coup d'œil*, which made

her, "though far the fairest flower," derive new grace and enchantment from those that bloomed around. What a delicious thing would life be in London, if balls, fêtes, and flattery could make it so! but people do grow old, and sick at last, even in London: and when confined to a half-deserted apartment, they are obliged to meditate upon that solitary one which is perhaps shortly to hold them.—It must be acknowledged that the contrast does not shew the latter to advantage.

Having found Mr. Seymour at the very summit of human felicity, it may be proper to relate the degrees by which he attained it. Springing remotely from a family of opulence and great consideration, it had been his ill-fortune to find the path of life too smooth before him. At nine years of age he had good nature: at eighteen he had good sense; at one-and-twenty he

he had a good estate : at thirty he had lost almost all that was good besides ; and at forty he was without any of these recommendations. It was convenient therefore to change his residence for one in another country, and he went to India in a civil capacity : but he carried with him indolent habits and moderate abilities. His fortune did not of course improve rapidly, but after a period of some years had elapsed, circumstances did for him, what he did not seem very likely to do for himself ; and he had realised a property, not splendid indeed, but considerable, when intelligence that the family estate, which ten times exceeded the patrimony he had spent, was likely to devolve to him by the deaths of several intermediate parties, determined him to sail immediately for England. He accordingly reached it in the beginning of spring. The business of taking possession detained him in town till the summer

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months; when, after having enjoyed, in their fullest extent, the pleasures of temporary celebrity, he retired to a villa which he had engaged for the season, on the Devonshire coast, in order to repair a constitution, somewhat shattered by his residence abroad, and to consider in what manner he could make his debut with most effect in London the succeeding winter.

Within the neighbourhood of Mr. Seymour's superb residence was a manor-house, which had formerly been superb also: but time had committed such irreparable devastations there, as left the family who tenanted it, little more real accommodation than they could have found in any thatched cottage of the adjoining village. Its size and appearance, however, the two particulars which alone recommended it to the favour of its inhabitants, attracted Mr. Seymour's attention; and a
little

little inquiry informed him that he was no stranger to the person who dwelt there. He might indeed, without any extraordinary effort of memory, have recollected, that he had been in fact very intimately acquainted with the gentleman in question : and that at a time when the latter was a much greater, and Mr. Seymour a much less man, than either of them now appeared to be. The Honourable Edward Cleveland was the younger branch of a family of rank, and had owed his acceptance in society chiefly to that circumstance. He had passed through all the gradations common to persons who have no original character of mind, and are merely what the world makes them. He had been successively a beau and a rake. Having undergone these transformations, and not exactly knowing what shape to take next, he married *pour se desennuyer*, and sank into a sloven. The happy pair continued

to live in the gay world, till they had hardly the means to live at all; and then retired, with two girls whom the mother was obliged to educate as she could, to the petty grandeur of solitude, idleness, and the country.

In spite of the many dissimilar circumstances of character or situation that intervened to keep Mr. Seymour and his neighbour at a distance, there still was one that promised to bring them in contact; both gentlemen were terribly in want of amusement, or as they would have phrased it—occupation. Mr. Cleveland had evidently had the ill fortune to leave the only one in which he ever truly delighted, behind him in London—his taste for dress; nor did he carry any into the country that could supply its place. The situation of his pecuniary concerns allowed him not the pleasures of riding or driving; and how,

as

as he often emphatically, and with some pathos observed, "could a gentleman employ himself without such resources!"

Ladies it should seem have the advantage on these occasions over the male part of the world. Mrs. Cleveland, though, like her husband, born and educated in the circle of fashion, and no way superior to him in abilities, had the good luck, on being first driven into retirement, to fall in with two or three active and notable house-wives, who gave her some hints with regard to domestic economy, without which indeed she perceived that her family were in danger of not having a dinner to eat, or a servant to prepare it. It was not that she had naturally any taste for these humble occupations; but she was of that fortunate sex which can sink to trifles without losing its dignity; while lordly man, once thrown, as he supposes, out of his place in society, often remains suspended, like Mahomet's
coffin,

coffin, a mere log—belonging neither to heaven, nor to earth. Mrs. Cleveland's good qualities were nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, the mere effect of accident and situation: necessity made her occasionally associate with her neighbours, but she always despised them; and had no other consolation, under the grievance, than that of seeing them gratefully look up to her in all matters of fashion and taste, whenever she condescended to avail herself of that more vulgar information which they could communicate. Julia, her eldest daughter, was her companion and her favourite; all the soft and timid graces of early youth lived in the eye and on the cheek of this charming girl; but her form was finished and womanly beyond her years, and was, indeed, such as would have embellished any features. Was Julia herself aware of this?—Perhaps no girl of sixteen is quite out of the secret, and she certainly had

had not quarrelled with the figure which her glass daily presented to her : but it is less the consciousness of possessing any advantage, than the degree of estimation we attach to it, that renders it dangerous ; and beauty was neither all-powerful nor all-sufficient in the eyes of Miss Cleveland. She was yet indeed, but little in the habit of considering it ; solicitous to free her mother from cares that were evidently irksome, she devoted herself almost solely to domestic occupations. Her tastes were simple, her enjoyments lively : a happy frame of mind, resulting both from nature and circumstances, accustomed her to find her pleasures in her duties, or to make them there. Her understanding was stronger than it appeared to be ; but it had hitherto been employed only in tranquillising her heart or her temper, if any little grievance ruffled either. The sorrowful day was yet to come when it was to sharpen

the arrow of affliction, and to shew her, with more acute and extended perception, the evils of painful pre-eminence. Matilda was not yet eleven years old, but in person as well as mind she strongly resembled her sister. In spite of the difference of their age, the same tastes and employments often engrossed both; and the first delight their hearts had ever known, was one which they still continued to enjoy in common; that of surprising Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland with some little proof of ingenuity or affection, calculated to lighten those hours which even their children had discernment enough to see hung most heavily upon them.

The arrival of so dashing an equipage as Mr. Seymour's was an event in the neighbourhood. Mr. Cleveland had not seen it, and those who had, knew too little of heraldry to give him any informa-

tion as to the family honors of the owner. He had seen the horses, however, led out to air; had reconnoitred their size and their colour, had talked with the grooms on all other particulars relative to them; and after asking a few cursory questions, such as a well-bred man allows himself to put to servants concerning their master, he thought with a sigh of Hyde Park and Bond street; and without recognising his old acquaintance Seymour, under the importance of his new character, turned his steps slowly homewards.

“What can we reason but from what we know?”—What is a man to talk of, but the only subject he is acquainted with?—Bond street and Hyde Park would not quit the imaginations of Mr. Cleveland and his wife throughout the remainder of the evening; and they passed it so agreeably in discussing their mutual recollections, that to
their

their very great astonishment the village clock had struck ten before either of them yawned. Matilda had long been buried in a sweet slumber: but Julia was permitted to be a silent though much amused auditor during this unusual excess, on the part of her parents. The conversation was not lost upon her: she in turn became troubled with a little curiosity to see this fine gentleman, and his fine equipage; nor was it long before she was gratified; for its owner, weary of solitary grandeur, at length condescended to acknowledge his old acquaintance, by stopping at her father's door: and poor Julia, without any premeditated mischief on her own part, soon after found herself in Cesar's situation, for she came, saw, and overcame: in a word Mr. Seymour fell, as he believed, desperately in love. His love, however, though decided, was not unmixed with other considerations and feelings than those of mere passion.

It had no little reference to the figure she would make in the world, to the rank of her connections, the *éclat* that would attend himself on having such a wife to shew, and the pleasure that must result from exciting the envy and admiration of all his acquaintance. His whole business in retirement had been to consider how he should emerge with due splendour; and fortune on this occasion seemed, he thought, to enlist on his side.

The fair object of Mr. Seymour's choice was in the interim not a little surprised to find herself thus suddenly become such. The gratification which this unlooked-for event seemed to afford her parents, operated upon her grateful and affectionate heart with a force she was perfectly unconscious of. She listened to the decision, therefore, in favour of Mr. Seymour as to a fiat from which she neither wished, nor knew how

to appeal; and when they with one voice declared, that she must be the most ungrateful creature living, were she insensible of his good qualities, she most implicitly took those good qualities upon trust, and felt ashamed to acknowledge even to her own heart that she was deficient in the virtue expected from her. The first stroke was struck; for her feelings were silenced or deceived, and nothing remained but to kindle her vanity; nor was the undertaking in either case a difficult task. Matrimony and love had never for a moment engrossed her thoughts. No creature had moved within her circle calculated to excite the latter, and her youth and retired modes of life made it little probable that the former should occur to her imagination. Nor were either permitted even now to take their place there. Her parents, and Mr. Seymour himself, though little skilled in the intricacies of the human heart, were

yet sufficiently aware of the sensibility that might secretly ferment in hers were she permitted to think; and in consequence of this persuasion, they, like practised jugglers, so dexterously shuffled the conjuring cards, that diamonds was the only suit presented to her eyes.

The acquiescence of Julia was all that had been expected by her parents or her lover. Yet the unswerving filial affection with which it was granted, now betrayed poor Mrs. Cleveland, of whom it could not properly be said that her understanding was corrected, but simply that her modes of thinking were changed, into a warm panegyric upon the sweetness of temper, the retired habits, and domestic good qualities of her daughter. The subject was Julia, and therefore Mr. Seymour had the complaisance to listen to it. But he continued to amuse himself with his toothpick

while she talked, and to examine at intervals the medallion which enriched a beautiful case that lay by him.

“ I am mighty easy on all the particulars you speak of, my dear Madam,” said he, when she had finished. “ My establishment, as you may suppose, will be upon a very extensive scale, and I mean to keep the best company.—Provided, therefore, that my wife be attentive and devoted to me, I shall readily dispense with other domestic good qualities.”—— Mr. Seymour did not recollect that the virtues are rarely solitary; and that he who insists only on the one amongst them which conduces to his own convenience, may thank his fortune rather than his prudence, if he do not miss them altogether. This reflection occurred, however, as little to the lady as to the gentleman. She felt shocked at a rusticity in her own ideas of
which

which she had not till then been aware, and impatient to correct the impression it must have made.

“As to domestic good qualities, my dear Sir,” she hastily exclaimed, “nobody knows better than myself how very little value is to be set upon *them* in a certain sphere of life. But *autres temps, autres mœurs*!—in our late confined way of living you have no idea how these little things contribute to happiness.”—Mr. Seymour did not think it necessary to answer, and the conversation fell to the ground, till Mrs. Cleveland, who had not yet recovered the alarm to her feelings, made a desperate effort to renew it, upon a subject to which she believed herself perfectly competent.

“The gay world,” said she smiling, “well be quite a new scene to our Julia!”

Mr. Seymour smiled also, and graciously inclined his head.

"I shall take care to give her my advice upon several essential points before she appears in it."

"Don't you think you have been rather too long absent from town for that purpose?" replied Seymour, breaking from a very deep reverie. Poor Mrs. Cleveland was now quite thrown out; she could only stare.—"Mode is so variable," continued Mr. Seymour in the same indolent tone. "Courage, however! We shall find some female friends to consult with; but the outset in these cases is every thing—every thing, my dear Madam! and we must have her dress well, you know, at all events." With a slight bow, he took his hat and strolled into the garden; leaving Mrs.

Mrs. Cleveland half angry, half ashamed : and so unjust to her future son-in-law as to suspect him of banter, when in fact all he uttered had been the fruit of decided opinion, and of his most serious cogitations.

Mr. Seymour, now satisfied as to the success of his wishes, thought it expedient to set out for London, in order to accelerate, by his personal influence, the splendid preparation for which he had already issued orders. He previously advanced to Mr. Cleveland a sum of money that considerably relieved his domestic embarrassments, and, under the sanction of future relationship, presented his Lady with a bill that enabled her to make that figure in town which his own pride required. A splendid carriage, with the Cleveland arms painted upon it, quickly transported the fair bride elect to the scene of her future triumphs, and in less than six weeks from that time

conveyed her to St. George's Church, Hanover Square; where her mother, with much joy and all due solemnity, saw her bestowed for better and for worse upon Mr. Seymour's town and country houses, his rent-roll and equipages, with all the valuables or encumbrances thereunto belonging—the owner included.

Poor Julia in the interim remained bewildered and abashed. She was pleased to be admired, she desired to be beloved; she entertained a confused notion indeed, that she should have liked her husband better had he been younger; but she felt that she did not hate him; and there were even some points in his character, independent of his very great merit, of which she never permitted herself to doubt, that excited her approbation. Minds of natural delicacy feel, without defining it, the charm of good-breeding. Mr. Seymour could be extremely
well

well bred when he was in good humour; and Julia had acquired in the society of her father and mother, whose manners were still those of people of fashion, a taste for that polish which, as it ought to be the result of much urbanity and sweetness of character, the unpractised heart readily conceives to be its invariable symbol.

One circumstance, however, sullied the gaiety of those scenes which preceded the marriage of Julia. Neither her father nor her sister were in London to share them. She had promised the little Matilda mountains of trinkets, and fairy scenes of pleasure, when the indisposition of Mr. Cleveland, who was subject to an hereditary gout, put a stop to his own journey, and induced him to resolve on keeping his younger daughter at home for his companion and nurse. The parting was most sorrowful between the two sisters. Matilda

was

was taken almost forcibly into the house, and Julia, "like a rose-leaf wet with morning dew," slept slowly after her mother into the carriage. Among those who sincerely regretted the unlooked-for separation, the bridegroom himself was certainly not one; however complaisance might induce him to affirm the contrary. To say truth, the Honourable Edward Cleveland was, in his opinion, a very dull fellow: and though his name made a most desirable figure for a paragraph in the newspaper, his company was the last thing really wished for by his son-in-law; who even had it already in contemplation to dismiss the Honourable Mrs. Cleveland from his future establishment, as soon as with any decency he could do so. An auxiliary he did not expect, however, saved him that trouble, by suddenly giving the gentleman an invitation to another world, and by summoning the lady to attend, not on his soul but his body;

body ; for the soul had departed before she could arrive ; and was indeed, except that it had been in the habit of setting the body upright upon two legs every day, as little to be missed as any soul that ever yet took a visible form in this nether world.

None, however, are so useless or so frivolous, that Nature does not enlist some heart in their cause. Shame on such as take no pains to deserve her bounty ! Tears of unfeigned affection were shed by the family over Mr. Cleveland's grave ; and his son-in-law, in place of those which he found he could *not* shed, decorated it with a handsome marble and inscription. The widow and her youngest daughter now remained alone in the country, and in the country he intended they should remain.

" Oh, pray let us fetch my mother and sister," cried Julia.

" My

“ My dearest angel,” said Mr. Seymour, willing any way to silence her, “ nothing could make me so happy as to oblige you, —but it really would not be decorous for your mother to be seen in town just at this crisis.” Julia sighed — lamented, but she was too ignorant of life to decide upon propriety or impropriety. She wondered, however, that decorum and right feeling should be so continually at variance. It was not indeed the first time that the delicate and timid Julia had wondered at this, though upon less solemn occasions. But her mother and her husband had never yet had more than one opinion : theirs had uniformly guided hers, nor did she on this occasion suspect them of differing.

The death of Mr. Cleveland was nevertheless a terrible blot upon this brilliant era of Mr. Seymour’s life. It seemed as though he had in very malice died at per-

haps the only period when his son-in-law would have wished him to live a little longer. Seclusion and mourning were of necessity the portion of the lovely bride. Mr. Seymour, however, determined to shorten both as much as lay within his power: and here again his never-failing friend Fashion, stepped in to assist him.

The grief of a young heart, in proportion as it is acute, is transient. Every possible allurements and temptation were displayed to dissipate Mrs. Seymour's; nor was there a person or thing around that could perpetuate recollection. She sank, therefore, after a time, into quiet sorrow; and at length began to smile. The days of mourning had been limited by the impatient husband, and he already anticipated that on which he was to display his prize. "There are secrets, however, in all families;" and before Julia was thrown into general society,

society, Mr. Seymour deemed it advisable to give her some partial information with respect to a subject in which he was deeply interested.

“Have you any objection to driving on the Kensington road this morning, my dear?” said he, while putting her into an elegant new curricule.—“I am going,” he added, as they passed through the park, “to present a new acquaintance to you.”

“She will prove a pleasant one, I hope,” said Julia, smiling.

“The person of whom I speak is not a female.”

“Better still! I hope then that *he* will prove pleasant.”

“Time

“Time must determine that point: at present the gentleman is only twelve years of age, and—” he hesitated for a moment—“a distant relation of mine.” An embarrassment so marked conveyed some meaning, even to the unsuspecting Julia; who would have otherwise passed on to the mere circumstance before her, without either comment or surmise.

“*How distant?*” returned she, somewhat archly.

“My dear Julia,” cried Mr. Seymour, “I see your suspicions; but I give you my honour that they are ill-founded.—The boy is merely”—they stopped at that moment at the gate of a large house, which announced itself to be an Academy, and Mr. Seymour, giving the reins to his servant, inquired for Master Villars. Master Villars presently made his appearance.

“A very

“ A very good countenance,” said Julia, in a whisper,—“ but he does not resemble you.”

“ I swear to you, my Angel——”

“ Hush! No swearing, I intreat! It would be a dangerous example here; and if, by any terrible chance, I should discover that you were forsworn!——”

“ I give you leave to treat me, in that case, accordingly.” Then taking the boy by the hand, he presented him to her:—telling him at the same moment that that lady was Mrs. Seymour.

“ We shall improve our acquaintance,” said she, extending her hand very graciously towards him. “ You must be my eldest son.”

“ I am

"I am a great deal too old," said the boy, though not without embarrassment.

"Would you rather be my brother?"

"Yes: for then I could take care of you."

"Very valiantly resolved at least, but I rather think my turn will come first in that way." The boy, though he looked abashed, blushed proudly, and Mr. Seymour took up the conversation.

"This young gentleman seems quite a hero in embryo," said Julia, gaily, as, after a suitable stay, they returned to the curicle. "He did not seem above half pleased at the offer of *my* protection. I believe that he thought you were jesting when you told him I was your wife."

“ He knows that I am not much accustomed to jest,” replied Mr. Seymour, with a little more asperity of tone than he had ever yet used in speaking to Julia.

“ He looked so incredulous that I am persuaded he took me for a school girl.”

“ He was a senseless blockhead then !” peevishly exclaimed her husband.

“ His countenance in that case belies him, for I never saw one that pleased me better.—And now,” she sweetly added, “ tell me frankly, dear Mr. Seymour, *how* nearly he is related to you ; and believe that every degree of confidence which conduces to your happiness, will always increase mine.” Seymour looked in her soft intelligent eyes as she spoke, and saw she was in earnest.

“ Why, my love, will you persist in thinking that there is any thing more to tell? Charles Villars is an orphan: consanguinity, when it passes a certain point, is neither very easily understood nor explained: but he is, as I informed you, related to me. His patrimony is very small; and his friendless situation had thrown the care both of that and of his person, into the hands of low people, on whom he had no natural claims. I rescued him from them, and mean to give him the education of a gentleman: after which I shall send him to India.”

“ Generous, kind-hearted creature! Allow me to participate in your good works. Pray bring Charles Villars often to see us!”

“ By no means: it is not my wish to make him a fine gentleman, but merely to

fit him for pushing his way in the world. I will very frankly acknowledge my reason for presenting him to you : I thought it probable you would hear that I occasionally looked in upon such a person, and I was unwilling to expose you to the risque of doubtful and disagreeable reports. Let us now change the subject." Mr. Seymour cleared his countenance when he had finished his harangue, and looking at the complacent one of his wife, he saw that she believed it implicitly.

A decent period had at length elapsed since the death of Mr. Cleveland ; the days of mourning therefore closed, and the lovely Mrs. Seymour was brought out !— But, alas, in the empire of ton there are many competitors ! and some, courageous enough to snatch that laurel which is not voluntarily presented to them. This was a species of courage in which Mrs. Sey-

mour was totally deficient, and the success of her debut was therefore not proportioned to the degree of expectation attending it. The disappointment was easily accounted for. However graceful her person and lovely her features, her address was still timid, and her manners somewhat reserved. She neither talked nor laughed loud. She loved not crowded assemblies; she sought not adulation; she shrunk from gallantry; her eyes never canvassed the circle for applause; her husband's opinion continued to influence her actions, and that husband might possibly, had he so pleased, have remained ever the happiest of men. But the felicity to which Mr. Seymour had aspired, was by no means of this quiet and retired nature; and his mortification was proportioned to his hopes. He now, for the first time in his life, began to distrust his own judgment, even in that point on which he had hitherto been most

decided.—Was it possible that he had deceived himself?—Had he married a rustic, and fancied her a Venus? Where else were the eyes—the ears—the hearts of all his acquaintance? Truth was, they were just then pre-engaged: engaged by that strongest of all ties, their own vanity. Admiration, among the votaries of the gay world, is a traffic mutually understood; and no individual of the leaders of fashion continues to give what is not repaid. The fair stoic, therefore, who received the tribute without feeling its value, did not yet rank sufficiently high to secure it long.

Mrs. Seymour, however, careless and gay, was extremely well satisfied with herself, and with all around. She thought the world a very amusing place, nor was she at all indifferent to the desire of pleasing there; though too ignorant of the free-masonry

maſonry of ton, either to know or to care whether ſhe were one of the initiated: a lurking ſenſibility indeed ſometimes fluttered at her boſom, when men particularly gifted, either by nature or education, diſtinguiſhed her with their applauſe; and not knowing, on thoſe occaſions, exactly how to ſilence the intruder, ſhe had reſort to the remedies preſcribed by her mother and her huſband. She tried the expenſive ornaments beſtowed by the latter, upon her beautiful arms and neck, and would not believe it poſſible that ſhe could fail in attachment to a man ſo kind and ſo generous as the donor. She ſat ſoberly down in her dreſſing-room to enumerate, and that with the utmoſt care and punctuality, his good qualities and his claims, and ſhe finiſhed the calculation with a firm reſolution to love him with all her heart. Poor Julia was little aware of the enemy concealed in that heart.

Nature, invincible Nature, asserted her rights: and in the course of a few months Mrs. Seymour had the mortification to discover, that though she had cultivated very successfully her attachment to all the good things belonging to her husband, she could not, in spite of her utmost efforts, extend the fondness to himself. This was a terrible blow; and she was very seriously angry with her own perverse heart. No struggle however set it right. "Wicked and ungrateful that I am," sighed she to herself; "but if I cannot love Mr. Seymour as I ought, I will carefully guard the secret, and will love nothing besides." This appeared a most excellent expedient: arming her bosom therefore with triple steel, she now deemed herself secure in her own impenetrability, and again sallied boldly into life. But sensibility, like every other gift of Nature, may be too greatly repressed, as well as too greatly indulged;
and

and the cold chills of the heart are always dangerous. They return its most wholesome impulses into the mental constitution, and the vanity that breaks out on the surface is often the least evil that follows.

And how did Mr. Seymour employ himself while these various shades of feeling and folly were passing over the mind of his fair companion?—Mr. Seymour was by no means without his resources for pleasure. Although disappointed at finding that his wife did not dash at once into celebrity, he knew fortune to be a medium for attaining it, much less fallacious than beauty; and on that he now rested his pretensions. Did taste introduce a new luxury, or vanity invent a new extravagance? Mr. Seymour piqued himself on being the first to display either. Profusion was the regular order of the day in his establishment, and the reputation

tation of its being so his reward. All went now, therefore, according to his wishes, and the world was at his feet. His entertainments were talked of,—his suppers were paragraphed,—carriages were dashed to pieces in the attempt to approach his door; and crowds amused themselves with describing the elegance of his assemblies, that had never advanced further than the stair-case. Seven years passed away in one uninterrupted triumph of fashion and gaiety; at the expiration of which time, Mr. Seymour found himself to have been so eminently successful in all his undertakings, as to have spent every shilling of the fortune he brought with him from India, and to be under the necessity of dipping his landed estate, if he meant to pursue his usual modes of living. To this last measure he had only one objection; but that was decisive.—It was not in his power.

When

When a man blunders upon an unlucky discovery with regard to himself or his affairs, he seldom makes only one. Mr. Seymour was soon too well convinced of this truth. He had toiled very hard for the last two years of his life to keep up the character of a *young* man, and it was amongst his vexations to perceive that the smallest discomposure of circumstances endangered that happy harmony of features on which he had partly rested his pretensions. Nor was this all : in spite of every exertion of his animal spirits, he frequently found himself asleep with his eyes open at some of the gayest balls, and what was still worse, as being more liable to observation, asleep with them shut, after the finest dinners. In short age and economy stared him full in the face, and only one spectre besides could more have alarmed him.

During

During the interval of time that had elapsed since Mr. Seymour's marriage, he had had the misfortune to be twice disappointed of an heir. He could not with justice, nor even, as it happened, with injustice, arraign the discretion of Julia in either case, for he had himself been accessory to the dissipation that caused his loss. Both husband and wife, however, regretted it deeply, and each secretly resolved to be more guarded on any similar occasion ; but no such occasion appeared likely to occur. Mrs. Cleveland thus deprived of a pretext for coming to town, of which she had twice availed herself to make no inconsiderable stay there, was obliged to remain stationary with Matilda in the country. The gay visions that had danced before her imagination on the day when she bestowed her daughter on Mr. Seymour, had faded almost immediately after. During the fortnight

night the first spent in his house she had had conviction that she never was welcome there ; but Julia, fondly attached to her mother and sister, wrung from him by importunity an occasional exertion of complaisance which he was otherwise very little disposed to shew. Matilda had reached fifteen when she last visited London, and from that time she was invited thither no more. The correspondence that continued on the part of Julia, though overflowing with kindness, was often dilatory ; and a certain degree of reserve that marked her letters, as to all that related to passing events, was a source of secret disappointment to both of those who received them. Mrs. Cleveland loved the world for its own sake ; — Matilda for her sister's : but that sister had penetration enough to foresee that she too might learn to love it for its own ; and sufficient experience of its dangers to fear that she should do so.

Time

Time and circumstances that had performed such wonders for Mr. Seymour with regard to his fortune, had been no less propitious to his wishes in what respected his wife. Their irresistible influence operating slowly on her character, had changed every thing in it but her heart. She had been led for seven years through the mazes of folly and fashion ; had danced gaily on the verge of many a precipice, and in the full bloom of four and twenty, was at length become all that he had once desired to see her. Familiar with crouds, accustomed to homage, the model of fashion, and conscious, in all its extent, of the value of beauty : not, indeed, of that beauty which is the grace of the virtues and the finish of the sex, but of that which delights to dazzle, to overwhelm, and is cherished as the substitute for every advantage besides.

“ Where

"Where Seymour were you lucky enough to find that lovely creature," was now the perpetual exclamation of half his acquaintance.

"Where I wish, with all my soul, I had been lucky enough to leave her," was as constantly the internal reply of Mr. Seymour.—"Psha!—she was Ned Cleveland's daughter."

"What a fyren it is!—hear how she sings!" Mrs. Seymour, however, could not sing; at least not scientifically. But she had now reached that pinnacle from whence her very deficiencies appeared to be perfections. Her knowledge of music was confined, but her ear was exquisitely true, and she had those low and melting notes in her voice which are always sure to reach the heart; perfectly informed how to add to them, by every grace of expression and every charm
of

of feature, she delighted in this case, as in all others, to baffle sober judgment or critical skill. The women said it was detestable and out of all taste or time; the men thought it exstastic: she secretly smiled at both—but she knew her power, used and abused it.

“ Pray Mr. Seymour,” said she one day, as by accident they found themselves for half an hour *tête à tête*, “ what is become of Charles Villars?—I am sure it is more than a century since you either saw or heard of him. Do you know that I think you treat that poor boy very ill?”—

“ That boy is a man,” replied Mr. Seymour.

“ Oh frightful ! A man !—By that rule I should be then an old woman.—Let me see

fee!—one—two—three—four and twenty, as I live.”

“Time Madam,” returned the gentleman, not much charmed with the subject, “is what we make it—some people will always be young in their conduct.”

“And some, dear Mr. Seymour, would be always young in their years.—But come—tell me honestly what you have done for your son and heir?”

“How should he be my heir, Madam?”

“Nay, that,” said she, smiling at the indirect acknowledgment of her first charge, “the casuists must determine: I am sure that *I* hope he is not. But to ask the question more decorously then, what have you done for Charles Villars?”

“Obtained him an appointment. He sails with the first ships for India.”

“Heaven send him good fortune there ! Be sure you tell him he has my maternal benediction, in case I should not see him before he leaves England.”

“Nonsense !” said Mr. Seymour, half subduing his features to a smile.

“I shall be afraid that it is such, if you look so well pleased with it.”

“And pray, Madam, when did I ever fall out with good sense ?”

“Fall out is a harsh phrase—but you must grant, my dear Mr. Seymour, that you do not much love to fall *in* with it—at least in the person of your little wife. But come, do not be offended where no offence

offence is meant :” and half rallying, half chiding, she restored him to apparent good-humour. This, however, was a sort of badinage, a great deal more amusing to her than to him. He had naturally no great stock of liveliness, and years had not increased it. His answer was not always ready, and her sprightliness was, on these occasions, often resented as an impertinent assertion of superior sense or wit, when it was in fact the mere result of youth, and *gaiété de cœur*. It was not, however, always so innocent of intentional offence; and there were moments when, like Lady Townly, she could squeeze a little too much acid into the cup of matrimonial felicity : and this was the more provoking, because it shewed off, at the same time, a thousand playful airs, which her beautiful person embellished, and in which Mr. Seymour could certainly not enter the lists as a competitor.

The last conversation, and all that related to it, had past from the memory of Julia, when an accident revived it there. Her coachman was driving furiously home at a late hour to dinner, when by turning too short at the corner nearest her own house he dashed against another carriage. There was a heavy fog, and it was nearly dark: the shock was alarming, and the horses, which the man endeavoured to rein, beginning to plunge violently, left her in the utmost apprehension of what might ensue, when a gentleman who was passing and heard a shriek, forced open the carriage door with great risk to himself, and bore her out in his arms. She had just sense enough left to hear that her servants were around her, and on recovering, perceived that she was lying upon a sofa in her own house. The usual remedies had been successfully administered; and after listening to many lamentable exclamations

tions and inquiries from her maid, she had at length recollection enough to ask if any one knew the gentleman that had assisted her.

“ Oh, yes Madam,” replied the abigail, “ we all know him well enough :—it was Mr. Villars.”

“ Mr. Villars !” said Julia : “ What Villars ?”

“ My master’s Mr. Villars, Madam. He had not left the house five minutes when the accident happened. Not finding Mr. Seymour at home, he told the porter he would call again. It was a mercy he passed by at that moment, for few people besides would have ventured to do what he did.”

“ He is not gone away, I hope ?”

“ Not yet, Madam. He is waiting below stairs to know whether you are recovered.”

“ Desire him by all means to come up, that I may thank him.” He presently entered; but she had no recollection of his person: it was full grown and manly. Some traces, however, remained of the same character of countenance that had pleased her when she saw him before. He had an oval face, dark eyes, and features that harmonized in a manner which still struck her to be peculiarly engaging.

“ Mr. Villars can hardly, I believe, recollect me,” said she, inclining graciously towards him, as he entered.

“ Most distinctly Madam. It is not, I well know, the first time that you have done me *this* honour;” and he took the
hand

hand which she offered him. He then inquired, with some appearance of interest, whether she had suffered from the accident; and after a few minutes of very respectful attention, rose to take his leave. Manners so cold and so distant surprised, and a little offended her.

"May I inquire," said she, "whether you have any particular engagement?—the dinner hour is almost past."

"It is for that reason I forbear to trespass on you longer—I am returning home."

"Indeed I shall allow you no home in London but this house," cried she kindly; "especially after so gallant a rescue as that you have lately performed."

“ Pardon me, Madam—I had not Mr. Seymour’s invitation,”—and he looked surprised and embarrassed.

“ Perhaps Mr. Seymour was afraid of his wife,” returned she laughing. “ It is a very salutary fear, and I shall not therefore wholly discourage it. But I beg you for the future to understand that *I* order all these things. So put down your hat—you dine with us. We expect only gentlemen, and a servant shall in the evening receive any commands which you may think it necessary to send to your hotel.” She then rang the bell, and inquired whether Mr. Seymour was returned ; and receiving an answer in the negative, gave orders that the housekeeper should prepare an apartment for Mr. Villars.

Villars found himself at once perplexed

and

and gratified by this attention. He perceived that she supposed him to be just come to London ; yet he had in fact been there nearly three weeks : but as Mr. Seymour had, on his arrival, given him to understand that a residence with them would not be agreeable to his wife, he had hired apartments at a considerable distance from that part of the town. Whether the apparent cordiality of her invitation proceeded from temporary good-humour, or might be relied upon, Mr. Villars was unable to determine ; but whatever the cause, the effect was too pleasant, and she too engagingly peremptory, to admit of any denial from him.

Julia had on her side more delicate and decided motives of action than she suffered to appear. She thought herself indebted to her husband for the decorum which he had observed in not obtruding the young
man

man upon her; since it was plain from the answer of her woman, "my master's Mr. Villars," as well as from other hints dropt by the former, that every servant in the family guessed the affinity in which he stood to Mr. Seymour. Independent of a partiality which Julia had early conceived for Villars, his present friendless situation, half protected, half disclaimed, on the point of being dismissed to another hemisphere, and thrown thus, in the interval, upon his own discretion and powers of entertainment in so gay and busy a scene as London, inspired a very kind interest in his favour. In addition to this she found from her servants that he required some personal attention, as he had wrenched his arm very considerably in the effort of taking her out of the carriage, and the housekeeper had been bathing it before he could make his appearance above stairs.

"Your

"Your words seemed prophetic, Mr. Villars," said she, "when you promised to take care of me."

"Did I ever promise to do so?" replied he, with great softness in his eyes and voice.

"Oh, a thousand years ago; when you and I first met."

"I will hope, then," he added, "that the occasion is yet to come. As I did not know it was you whom I assisted, I shall not consider fortune as out of my debt."—

Mr. Seymour returned home extremely late, and hastened to her dressing-room: he heard of the arrangement made for her guest with some surprise, and mused a little upon it.

"You

“ You have perhaps done more kindly than wisely,” said he, at length : “ but Villars shall not incommode you long.” He then withdrew to the dinner table. Mrs. Seymour, though she had rallied her spirits, continued too much indisposed to appear there ; but as she meant to confine herself at home for the evening, and was not much in the habit of courting solitude, she gave Mr. Villars an intimation that he would be admitted to take his coffee upstairs.

How dangerous to the peace of the young man were the hours, the days that succeeded ! Mrs. Seymour, in all the graceful negligence of undress, soft—languid—interesting ;—shutting out society, and resting only upon those resources which her own playful manners and naturally poignant understanding supplied, was ten thousand

thousand times more irresistible than if she had at once blazed upon him in all the splendour of beauty and fashion. He saw her indeed only for about two hours every evening; which was the time that Mr. Seymour usually passed between the interval of dinner and of going abroad. She was not visible before, and she rarely staid above a quarter of an hour after. This arrangement, however, was not the effect either of circumspection or prudence on her part. She did not entertain the least doubt that Charles Villars perfectly well knew himself to be the son of Mr. Seymour; for the character of the latter was not such as to induce her, for a moment, to suppose, that the invariable attention which he had hitherto paid to the education and interest of the young man, could be attributed to generosity only. A sort of constraint that she observed in Mr. Seymour's manners and address, served strongly to confirm

confirm her opinion. He had not, in conversing with Villars, the easy and natural tone of a person who is conscious that he has conferred obligations, and shews exactly, even with ostentation, for such would doubtless have been his method of shewing it, the high ground on which he stands. He was like a man who constrained his own heart, and veiled some powerful impulse there, which by turns induced kindness and distance between them. Mrs. Seymour knew that her husband much desired a legitimate son, and she hardly doubted but that in that expectation he kept back from Villars the portion of fatherly fondness, which would perhaps, in any other circumstances, have been extravagantly lavished upon him. She had also great reason to hope that his wishes for an heir would not be disappointed.

Upon

Upon these three dangerous and intoxicating hours, the only ones now reckoned by Villars throughout the whole four-and-twenty, he nearly lived. Far from suspecting how transient this species of happiness was to prove, he was too new to life to be at all aware that Mrs. Seymour passed hers very differently. The elegant solitude of her magnificent house, the tranquillity, blended with taste, that distinguished every thing around her, and that graceful self-possession which is in fact only the result of elegant manners, but which seemed to him to mark the repose of the mind, all united to form an elysium, new alike to his senses and to his heart. It was the first time that Villars had ever known he *had* a heart. Removed, at a very early period of life, from every natural or habitual tie, without any companion but such as accident afforded him, or any relation but one who wore to his eyes the shape

of a benefactor, his affections had undergone a secret blight. Nor was there one among them, gratitude excepted, that had ever been allowed an object or aim. Whatever therefore was the tenor of his natural character, his habitual one, was sedate, thoughtful, somewhat melancholy. He had cultivated a passion for study, because to cultivate any passion was delightful to him; but his very studies, although circumstances rendered him not deficient in the severer branches of knowledge, were of a nature to cherish the secret romance of an ardent character; and to bestow, on every object in which he could take the least interest, all the embellishments of imagination, and all the fire of sensibility. Such was Charles Villars: who now emerged from the house of a retired clergyman, in which he had passed the last four years of his life, and where nature and simplicity had been the sole objects

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around,

around, to the brilliant habitation of Mr. Seymour.

The earth-shaking thunder that visited Mrs. Seymour's door every morning by way of civil enquiry after her health, was never heard by Villars. When he saw not her, he desired not to see any thing ; and if business, either respecting his own affairs or those of Mr. Seymour, did not necessarily engage him, he passed his time in long and solitary walks, engrossed by that species of meditation which is of all others most dangerous, because it has hardly any thing to do with the realities of life.

More than a week had passed in this delicious forgetfulness of the world, when Mrs. Seymour's brilliance and spirits returned. She staid one evening much longer than usual in the drawing-room after Mr.

Seymour had quitted it; and as Villars had a good deal of musical knowledge, she tried, accompanied by his flute, a number of passages that she was desirous to learn. They turned over the music books together, — laughed, — talked, — rallied, and passed the time so gaily, that Mrs. Seymour, looking at length upon her watch, rang, with some appearance of surprise and haste, for her maid. Mr. Villars very gravely wished her good night.

“ Sober mortal that you are,” said she, laughing; “ is it possible that you are thinking of sleep! Well,—pleasant dreams attend you.” — Sleep was however very far from Villars at that moment. His mind was full of a thousand delightful emotions, which he did not even attempt to investigate; and he employed himself in trying twenty times the same musical passages they had run over together: then closing

the books with disappointment, after a long reverie, he sat down and attempted to read. Repose, far from seeming likely to befriend him, was every instant farther off; and a period of time, much more considerable than he was aware of, had elapsed, when, to his astonishment, he heard the voice of Mrs. Seymour on the stairs. She was carelessly running over one of the airs so lately learned, and as the door was thrown open by her maid, she entered the room before either could be aware that they should encounter the other.

“Heavens, Mr. Villars,” exclaimed she, with great surprise on seeing him, “is it possible that you are still here! What on earth have you been doing all this time?”—Villars, dazzled by her appearance, had no voice or words to answer. Astonished, enchanted, he looked upon her as on “some gay creature of the element,” and such as

gerous,—and tolerably bewitching. What think you of *Flattery*?" And she held up a small mirror that was suspended by a wreath of roses from her waist.

"Armida, rather!" said Villars, gently touching it, to turn it towards her. "The enchantress Armida!"

"With all my heart! Armida then let it be, and you my Rinaldo. But unfortunately you are neither a lover nor a coxcomb!—What can I possibly do with such a non-descript?"

"Make me—both,"—returned Villars; but not without some hesitation.

"Why, that is no bad project! A little of both would improve you, I think: but that sort of improvement devolves to other hands, or rather to other eyes than mine:

however, if I know any thing of your character, the day will come,—“the day decreed by fates—” and when it *does* come, remember Armida!—She was skilled I believe in divination.” She then gaily bade him, a second time, good night, and accepting his offered hand, threw herself into the carriage that was in waiting. But though absent, she left him not. Armida—the enchantress Armida, swam before his waking eyes, disturbed his slumbers, haunted him with a painful brightness, which he could not dismiss from his imagination. Mrs. Seymour had thrown wildfire around her, and knew not the mischief she was doing.

On the succeeding days Julia resumed her usual habits of life: he therefore saw her only at the dinner hour; and she vanished after that, to some unknown, inaccessible earthly paradise, where *he* at least could

could neither trace nor follow her. Another—another, and another day still pursued the track of the former, and he learned, too late, that every succeeding one would pass in the same manner: that to see her out of a crowd was a hopeless expectation; and that though during the dinner hour she often smiled and addressed herself to him, there was not the remotest chance of any nearer communication between them.

The insupportable impatience, restlessness, and almost frantic regret that now seized upon the mind of Villars, made it impossible that he should doubt longer as to the nature of his feelings. Honour, gratitude, principle, every thing rose in arms within his bosom to oppose the growing passion. “What was Mrs. Seymour to him? What, perhaps, could she ever be? His wildest wishes, his most san-

guine hopes, could hardly extend to the bare possibility of calling her his. She might, indeed, by the probable course of human events, be freed from those ties which now bound her to another; but how could *he* dare aspire to, much less hope to win her? Where was his consideration in life? Where the fortune, or even the merit that should entitle him for an instant to indulge the expectation? In the interim, was she not the wife of the man on earth who had most obliged him? Was he not himself therefore bound by every thing sacred to an upright mind, to forbear attempting the alienation even of her affections? To extort from her one look of sympathy, one thought of tender hospitality, would be to violate at once hospitality and honour." Villars was too upright not to spurn the supposition. But the human mind is compounded of wisdom and folly, rectitude and self-deceit.

That

That idea which we reject with terror in one shape we embrace without remorse in another, and the severe, unqualified rule of right alone can steadily guide us. "Can Mrs. Seymour be any thing to me," he repeated to himself a thousand times a-day. "Yes, she may innocently continue to be the Armida of my imagination; the Laura to whom I consecrate my life; the realised representation of a thousand visionary charmers, who have been described with visionary passion, while mine burns secretly and silently at my heart. This is an indulgence that can neither trespass on the most rigid honour, nor the most unfulfilled chastity." Poor Villars in fine, at nineteen, a lover and a poet, yielded to the chimerical idea that he might safely cherish a passion which should eventually injure no one but himself.

Preparations meantime were daily making for his departure for India. An event to which he looked forward with a sort of calm desperation that seemed to leave it to the moment to decide what his conduct would prove. The preparations were indeed so far advanced that hardly any thing was wanting towards the completion of the business, but to secure the appointment; and Mr. Seymour, in the account he had given of this, when it was mentioned to his wife, had not been altogether correct. Large promises had indeed been made him, and on these he had relied; but with his friends, as with friends in general, there was a wide distance between promise and performance, and so many obstacles had on the present occasion intervened to disappoint and chagrin him, that he began to suspect it would be impossible to secure his object, except by the indirect

indirect mode of purchase. It was neither convenient nor agreeable to him, however, at that juncture to part with the money that would be requisite on such an occasion, and he, therefore, continued to hope for some favourable chance, long after the period when his knowledge of the world should have taught him that no such chance was likely to arise. What passed within the limits of his own house was in the interim the least employment of his thoughts. By that ill-luck which too often attends the votaries of ton, he was become disqualified for enjoying his triumph at the very crisis when he had attained it. He began, therefore, to entertain a most decided enmity to fashion, in whatever shape she presented herself; and the state of his fortune made him secretly revolve a variety of new projects as to his future life, which in due season he intended to communicate to his wife. Till that period should arrive, he permitted

permitted her, though not without testifying sufficient symptoms of increasing peevishness on his own part, to run blindly on in the usual routine of extravagance and dissipation.

This dissipation, whatever might be its nature or extent, it now became the most ardent wish of Villars to partake. He found it impossible, as he believed at least, to live out of the sight of Mrs. Seymour, and as impossible to attain it except by mingling in her circle. Pride, delicacy, and a nameless fear that the true motive which influenced him would be suspected, for a considerable time chained up his tongue. But after long hovering around her with fruitless impatience and persevering attention, he at length found the opportunity of engaging hers; and with a reluctance that nothing but the temptation before him could have conquered, he ventured to de-
scribe

scribe the irksomeness of a life that was neither spent in business nor pleasure. A hint was sufficient for Julia; who in all that did not interfere with her own tastes and pursuits was still delicately and anxiously alive to the power of obliging. She invited him at once to her box at the opera, and presented him with a ticket from among several which she had at command, for one of the most splendid assemblies in London. Mr. Villars was now enlisted in the gay world. But the gay world was secretly nothing to him. It was Julia, and Julia only that his eyes followed, and his heart incessantly demanded. The romance of his character induced him to treasure up those words as indeed prophetic, which she had recalled to his memory: and that *he* would guard, *he* would defend her, was the invariable dream of his imagination.

The

The evils against which Mrs. Seymour would require to be guarded, were not, however, such as Villars could avert ; and he himself had soon too much opportunity of ascertaining this. The avidity with which he saw her plunge into crowds occasioned his wonder ; the conduct she pursued there, excited even a less agreeable sensation. The presuming and the dissolute of either sex, if authorised by rank and fashion, approached her indiscriminately ; and the courage with which when they trespassed beyond certain bounds, she either repressed or awed them, though necessary to her in discretion, yet took something from the charm of her character. “ It would have been so graceful to have shrunk from them altogether,” thought Villars. “ Why encounter men marked out by public censure, or private enormities ? Why associate with women
whose

whose least fault is that they neglect every duty becoming their sex, and renounce every grace but that which externally belongs to it? Oh Julia, adorable Julia, can you voluntarily do this?"

The impression which Mrs. Seymour had made on his heart and his senses was not, however, to be superseded by succeeding events. As he took no interest in any thing that passed around him, except as it related to her, his attentions were soon noticed, and his person distinguished, by those whose jealousy was likely to be excited by either. The question of *who is he?* presently ran through various circles; and the report of the household soon made the conjecture respecting his affinity to Mr. Seymour be publicly whispered. An intimate of the latter, troubled either with more curiosity, or more observation than

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the rest, determined to satisfy himself and his acquaintance on the subject.

“ Is the young fellow that lives with you, your son, Seymour ? ” said he.

“ The world I hear is so impertinent as to proclaim him such,” replied Seymour, with some hesitation, and an equivocal smile that spoke him not well pleased with the question. The point was now determined ; Villars consequently sunk from the wonder of the day into the genteel insignificance of a half-acknowledged, half-disclaimed appendage to the family : and except that he was thought to make his bows with more or less grace in the different circles, and was more or less fortunate in opportunities of approaching Mrs. Seymour, his hours passed without being apparently marked in any calendar either
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of the pleasures or interests of life. But in his own bosom was lodged a source of ever-varying feelings, over which chagrin was but too often predominant. It was now among his frequent mortifications to be an auditor, and from propriety a silent one, of those indirect sarcasms which malice or ill nature delighted to level at Mrs. Seymour. Without being of force to justify resentment, they continually excited indignation ; nor was it the least of his chagrins that her conduct too often seemed to sanction their utmost severity.

“ You will drive me distracted, if you whisper again with that coxcomb,” said he, almost forcing his way to her one evening through a crowded assembly.

“ You are distracted already, I think,” replied she, astonished at the abruptness

and familiarity of his address. "What can you mean?"

"It is impossible for me at this moment to tell you."

"And it is impossible for me to wait another moment before I hear: so pray follow me directly." And without the least attention to appearances, she instantly broke through the croud around, to pass a suite of apartments.—"And now," she added, as they stood by the fire in an ante-room, "tell me what it is that has thus disturbed you." Villars remained for some moments in indignant silence, but perceiving that she still waited for him to speak,

"Is he not," said he, at length, "an intolerable roxcomb?"

"And

" And are you to go distracted because I meet with a coxcomb?—My dear Mr. Villars, how have you contrived to keep your senses so long?"

" But this man is insolent—malignant."

" Oh! now I begin to comprehend you! You have overheard him abuse me! I saw you stand near him between the doors, and had he been employed in observing you instead of me, it is probable he might not have been very well pleased with some looks you cast upon him. Well!—What did he say?"

" More than any one living shall dare repeat in my hearing."

" Do not be too sure!—I am going to be that very daring mortal myself: and I believe I can give a tolerable guess at the

crimes and misdemeanors alleged against me. You see I know the character of the gentleman, and I am afraid," she added laughing, "I shall only prove that he knew the character of the Lady. He asserted, perhaps, that I was vain—insolent—capricious!—that I trespassed against all rule and decorum.—Perhaps that I encouraged hopes!—Perhaps—more than encouraged them!"—

"*That* at least he ventured not to say."

"Then he was very good natured : for all the rest is, I am afraid, simple truth, and it is a rare thing when an angry man confines himself to that.—Nay, my dear Charles do not look so like a knight of romance!—I have all these faults—aye, and ten thousand more ! however to console you for the mortification of having heard this coxcomb say, what perhaps fifty coxcombs

combs besides are saying at this moment, I promise you to revenge my own cause. You shall see the very man in question follow me like my shadow, and obey implicitly the most absurd of my caprices."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, forbear so dangerous an experiment."

"Dangerous to whom pray?"—No answer. "Mr. Villars," she added, "our acquaintance is, correctly speaking, of very late date; it may be proper at this period of it to hint to you, that I do not love advice—and never follow it."—

"Haughty—insolent beauty!" thought Villars; and he continued almost motionless on the spot where she had left him, till her carriage was called. He then advanced hastily, with the hope of presenting his hand, but had the mortification to

perceive that she had already given hers to the very man whom of all others he thought she ought to have avoided. Mrs. Seymour was indeed very seriously offended: perhaps the more readily so, as her husband, by a transition neither uncommon nor unnatural, had lately passed, from sharing the pleasure of her celebrity, to jealousy of her conduct. Domestic dissension was, therefore, in danger of rising high between them; for the dissipation Mr. Seymour no longer chose to partake, he already began indirectly to controul: as he did not, however, yet think it necessary to assign any reason for the change in his own modes of life, and as hers were only what they had been for several years past, she resented his interference with that tone of independence and indifference which her habits had taught her insensibly to contract. But though she could resent, she could neither forget nor silence his censures; and her
home

home was therefore in danger of becoming hateful to her; delightful it had never been. The extreme disparity of years between herself and Mr. Seymour had disqualified him, in spite of her most anxious endeavours to the contrary, either to become an amiable or agreeable companion to her. It had been almost as little in her power to be such to him. Her personal charms were, indeed, such as no husband could see with indifference; but her ideas, during the first years of their marriage, had been girlish and trifling; she had read little, she had seen little: her acuteness of understanding was therefore troublesome to him, for it was not regulated either by judgment or experience; and her sprightliness fatiguing, for it was often ill-timed, and always ill suited to the measure of his abilities. What happiness, though she had proved herself the most domestic of human beings, could be hoped from such an union?

Early tutored in folly as she had been, it now threatened to be productive of the utmost misery.

But although imperfection had thus imperceptibly tainted the mind of Mrs. Seymour, her heart, which had once been the precious home of the virtues, had neither discarded nor ceased to value them; and it soon conquered the temporary resentment which influenced her conduct. When she threw the general herd of men to a distance, she was assured that she only returned them to another circle of society: but Villars had no circle—no place there—no existence, except such as her influence created, and she was yet ignorant that he desired not to have any other. Without exactly penetrating into his feelings, she had observation enough to perceive that he was silent, thoughtful, at intervals almost desponding: that though
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he did not absent himself from society, he addressed no one there; and she knew enough of the world to foresee, that if he continued to carry such an exterior into it, no one would long take the trouble of addressing him. She suspected his pride to be deeply wounded, and a delicacy in her own nature induced her to regret that she had probably added a mortification to that which his situation might, in numberless instances, expose him to. Her observations, however, were not confined merely to the manners or acceptance of Mr. Villars in society. There was something in the general tenor of his conduct, which struck her to be singular and mysterious. That she could be the object of any feeling in his bosom beyond that of tender gratitude, circumstanced as they were with respect to each other, had never occurred to her; nor did it now. She did not fail however to remark, that although
he

he was to be seen in every place, he appeared to have no pleasure, nor object of pursuit in any. Her own eyes, when she was in company, were too much engaged to admit of her making frequent observation upon his; but she saw enough to be convinced that they were incessantly and watchfully upon her; and a new idea, in consequence, presented itself to her imagination. Mr. Seymour had for some time past withdrawn from the parties in which she mingled, yet he was distrustful, anxious, peevish, and inquisitive as to the persons she saw there. Could it be possible that, though absent himself, he had had address enough to substitute Villars as a spy upon her actions? Her opinion of the justice, and even of the generosity which she conceived to be blended in the character of the latter, could not shelter him from this surmise. She was assured that his ideas upon all points relative to honour and delicacy, were romantically

manically rigid; and therefore believed it by no means improbable that he was trying her conduct by some high-flown, speculative standard of perfection, which might dispose him to view it with eyes very little different from those of her husband. His own lips had informed her, almost unequivocally, that she stood arraigned for indiscretion and levity; and how easily might he, when thus prepossessed, be induced to believe that he did only what propriety and justice demanded of him, in becoming the guardian of Mr. Seymour's honour, and her reputation. This idea certainly did not please her: but that which succeeded, did. It would be a whimsical project, she thought, to transform the spy into a traitor. It was one exactly suited to the sportiveness of her character, and to the habits of her life. At Mr. Villars's age, a smile, an ingratiating word, a kind and confidential glance, from

from a woman whose every glance was ambitiously coveted, would, she knew, be irresistible corruption: and why should she hesitate to practise so innocent an artifice? It was not concealment that she desired to obtain from him, for she had no secrets to conceal. It would therefore be mere badinage—*ruse contre ruse*; and she anticipated a whimsical sort of triumph in bewildering the judgment, and putting to flight the sober prudence, thus insidiously enlisted against her. The plan once adopted, there was not the smallest difficulty to impede the execution of it: for she was really disposed to feel a partiality for Villars, and had only to indulge freely the natural bent of her own character, in order to let him understand how highly she thought of him. He was too anxious an observer not to read the very first look that announced him forgiven; and he felt that he should never repeat an offence, the consequence

sequence of which he would have averted at the sacrifice of his life. Nor was this all he felt. By degrees an uncertain and tumultuous pleasure began to agitate his heart, the nature of which he dared not attempt to ascertain. It could not be hope: he ventured not to desire that it should prove such. But it was irresistible, it was enchanting; it breathed into him a new life; it animated his character, it enlivened his faculties, made every place delightful, and inspired him with complaisance and indulgence for every person. Mr. Villars, in fine now trod on ice: he had lost the vanguard of the virtues, when he parted with prudence; and they are either a most sociable, or a most cowardly band, for they generally steal off, one by one, when the foremost is dismissed from the service.

While

While Julia and Villars thus sported over the fairy ground of allurements and indiscretion, Mr. Seymour had been engrossed by a variety of contemplations. A more exact review of the state of his affairs had shewn him, that he had been dangerously dilatory on some points of importance; and such was the constitution of his mind, that on those very points he was likely still to remain so. Turning his eyes, therefore, as men commonly do, from that which he was not disposed to view fairly, nor courageous enough to decide upon otherwise, he gave himself up to cogitations of a different kind. His Arcadian schemes were now perfect. Domestic ease, rural retirement, total seclusion from a world of which he persuaded himself he was most philosophically weary; in a word, *otium cum dignitate*, was, to use his own definition of it, the plan of his future life.

Imper-

Impertinent people might have doubted its correctness ; but it had been from the first his intention to take neither opinion nor advice ; and he certainly shewed more forbearance than is generally found in persons who have made that resolution, for he never asked any.

It was not, however, without a secret reluctance somewhat disgraceful to philosophy, that Mr. Seymour could finally resolve to give up that place in the world, which he had so dearly purchased, and so eagerly coveted. But our love of society is founded much less upon what we expect to find in it, than on that which we believe we shall carry there. Mr. Seymour could *not* carry the eclat he delighted in, and therefore he assured himself that he loved it no longer. It was precisely at this crisis of newly acquired stoicism, that all he had ever possessed was in danger of being demolished,

molished, by the expectation of an event which he had long most earnestly desired: he found that he was likely to have an heir. Pleasure however was not the only sensation by which his philosophy was now endangered: emotions of a very different nature had their share in his bosom. The homage paid to his wife had been a source of pain to him from the moment he had ceased to desire that she should receive it; and a restless suspicion, neither dignified enough for avowal, nor sufficiently timid to be totally disguised, had harrassed him for some months past. His mind was too gross to admit only a refined and limited jealousy, such as might have been excited by giddiness or indiscretion; and without adverting to the real character of his wife, or scrutinising her conduct, suspicions the most unjust and derogatory to her, now passed across his imagination. Yet the impression, though painful, was

too little justified by circumstances to be other than temporary. Slander had not indeed spared Mrs. Seymour, who, on her part, had ventured to defy it with a carelessness, that almost amounted to levity: but that very carelessness was, in the eyes of dispassionate observers, an argument in her favour. The various tales which were circulated on the contrary side of the question, were all of them vague and incongruous, nor had they uniformly pointed to any individual of the circle she associated with. But the triumphs of vanity are seldom to be indulged with impunity: hers too frequently imposed mortifications upon others, not to incur the penalty attending them; and among the credulous or the malicious, there were many who suspected her to be capable of error, though they ventured not to sully her fame with any decided calumny. In the former class Mr. Seymour himself was included. But the

evil suggestions that clung in consequence round his heart, and blighted what had once been his most highly-cherished hopes, were such as he could only indulge in silence. The crisis was nevertheless, he believed, at hand, which must either confirm or remove his apprehensions. If Julia, without extreme reluctance, consented to leave London, and be domesticated with him, the conclusion would be obvious and fair, that she had no illicit attachments in it; if otherwise, observation, detection and divorce presented themselves to his imagination in regular progress. Mr. Seymour, cold-blooded and worldly-minded, considered this mode of proceeding as due to himself; and contemplated without remorse the prospect of returning to obscurity, or marking with disgrace, a creature whose propensity to excellence he first had blighted, and whom he had purchased of herself, before she knew her own value:

a value he, like too many other husbands, had hitherto uniformly alloyed, by associating her with those whose follies degraded, and whose vices might corrupt her.

The better angel of Julia—or rather that which is the most angelic of all guards, a sweetness of character which might, under suitable circumstances, have rendered her happy, still interposed to prevent her rendering herself miserable. Lovely and admired as she was, the world could not fail to offer her attractions which needed not those of guilt to make her reluctant to quit it. Nor would it have been difficult for a mind of common generosity to have calculated and allowed for them. The fear of censure had, on this occasion, no share in deciding her conduct. She did not suspect the volcano that was ready to burst under her feet; nor dream for a moment that

Mr. Seymour, however jealous of the gaiety of her manners, could seriously distrust her fidelity. Many a pang of vanity, and many a sigh of heart-withering indifference for her husband, agitated her bosom therefore, as he explained the embarrassed state of his fortune, and the determination with which he meant to pursue his plans. The tone of Mr. Seymour's explanation was peremptory: for he knew his wife to be, on many occasions, of a character and manner so decided, that he had prepared himself to encounter her resistance, and was disposed both to calculate and prejudge its motives: nor was he aware of the different standard by which her conduct was at this crisis to be tried. It was in fact neither the influence of temper nor habits that now acted on Mrs. Seymour, but one more delicate, and infinitely more estimable. She had indulged, with secret and tender complacency, the hope of being

a mother: of possessing a creature for whom she could live, and whom she would passionately love. The demands of her heart seemed likely to be gratified, and though she certainly did not wholly conquer those of her vanity, neither did they wholly conquer her. A few years later would, in the natural course of things, have found her a little more selfish and a little more vain; for the bowl that runs on a declivity, will constantly have its motion accelerated; but at the period then before her, it was possible to arrest its progress by the very circumstances in which nature had placed her, and its progress *was* arrested. With that grace and sweetness therefore which was among her early characteristics, she acceded without remonstrance to the determination announced by her husband.

This was a flight above Mr. Seymour's belief or comprehension. What? Julia—the vain—the giddy—the admired—the dissipated—consent at once to quit the circle in which she delighted!—Part, without hesitation, from all the pleasures of luxury, and all the triumphs of conquest, to seclude herself in the country, simply because it was his desire that she should do so!—For Mrs. Seymour, with a delicacy that always attended her conduct when a favourite foible did not allure her to error, forbore to point out in its extent, the tender motive that most forcibly operated to effect her compliance. A black doubt, impossible to solve, struck at once upon the mind of her husband: too black and too remote to allow him to hint it; but it decided his conduct, while it was sedulously veiled, both by his looks and his words. Gratified, as he professed himself

to

to be, by her ready acquiescence in all that concerned the future, he therefore expatiated upon it with an enthusiasm that was too artificial not to be by turns both dispiriting and ludicrous. Was it possible for Julia to forget that this husband, with whom "her heart, her fortune, and her being, were to blend," amid all the delights of elegant retirement, and social leisure, was not in the least calculated to embellish either? Did no comparisons arise, no regrets embitter the sacrifices which situation imposed? Mrs. Seymour was a woman, not an angel; and she felt that while, discharging the first of all duties, they are most wretched and unwise, who have not previously assured themselves that the heart will act as an assistant. Mr. Seymour plainly perceived, that in proportion as he continued to talk, his wife grew absent and melancholy.

"Let us now call another cause," said he.
"And first, for that which of all our arrangements first demands our attention. It is time to think of dismissing Charles Villars."

"Indeed!" returned Julia.

"Can you doubt it?" said Mr. Seymour, with quickness.

"I own I see no good motive—nor even pretext for so doing. In what manner, therefore, can it be effected?"

"I, on the contrary, see both. And as to the manner—it is surely not more difficult to render a house disagreeable than agreeable, when the hostess is so disposed. Many reasons, however, may render *my* dismissing him a hardship, though prudence, under our present expectations and circumstances—

cumstances, may demand that he should go." Julia's eyes filled with tears.

"Can I hope to be a mother," said she, endeavouring to disperse them, as conscious that her sensibility was a tacit reproach to Mr. Seymour, "and not feel for the situation of a young man to whose views that event is likely to prove so fatal?"

"What is it you mean?"

"That I am deeply concerned to be the cause of ill-fortune to Mr. Villars. Why then will you render me such?—Be assured that I am neither selfish nor ungenerous enough to wish that you should do so. On the contrary, you cannot oblige me more than by making some provision, or at least finding some situation for him, suitable to his manners and talents, though not altogether to his birth."

"It

"It will be difficult to provide, Madam, for one of whom you have made a fine gentleman."

"Nature, dear Mr. Seymour, had spared either of us that trouble. I need not observe to you that she has been very liberal to Charles.—*You* surely will not quarrel with her for the kindness. And what is it that I have been able to do for him? merely to give him a temporary acceptance in society, which, I am sorry to say, my neglect would deprive him of to-morrow. If this has been an error, it has been a kind, I will venture to add, not an ungenerous one. But should it appear such to you, allow me at least to assist in repairing it."

"In what way, Madam?"

"Oh twenty ways," said she, gaily.
"Are you to learn the influence of a woman's

man's smile or frown? only point out to me any professional line in which interest may serve Mr. Villars, and be assured that I love him too well to spare any solicitation in his favour."

"You *love* him, Madam!"

"Can that possibly offend you?"

"By no means. It is so natural that you should love and befriend a son of mine!" and he fixed his eyes inquisitively upon her.

"I should be willing to befriend the son of any man, were he unfortunate; and yours in particular, whatever may be the prejudice that induces you to suppose the contrary. You *are* offended I perceive, though *why* I do not so easily comprehend. Pursue your own plans, therefore. Explain
your

your own intentions to Mr. Villars. 'The art of rendering my house disagreeable to him is one which assuredly I do not mean to study.—Poor Charles!'—and giving way to the impulse of her heart, she sighed deeply.

"He is in your eyes then extremely ill-treated, and very unfortunate, Madam."

"Is any being more unfortunate, Sir, than one who is exposed to be humbled, though not deserving of reproach? Who daily feels all the weight of obligation, without its being lightened by the tie of reciprocal kindness?—Mr. Seymour," she added, after a break, on feeling her eyes fill a second time with tears, "we both seem disposed to be more irritable than the occasion can reasonably justify. You, I conclude, are decided:—so am I.—I gave Mr. Villars a voluntary asylum in this house,

house, and my conduct had your sanction. Many motives of worldly prudence, and even if you please of decorum, were I much in the habit of considering either, might have prompted me to shut my door against him; but having once opened it, I am bound by ties that cannot be violated; nor shall any circumstance on earth ever induce me to affront or neglect him."

"Take care of what you affirm, Madam," replied Mr. Seymour, with a wrath which he seemed unable longer to controul. "Many circumstances may induce you to curse—not only the hour that introduced him here, but that which brought him into the world." He snatched up his hat, and before it was possible that she should answer, had quitted the room. Julia remained alone, lost in a fit of profound meditation. A vague and affecting similitude that had struck her while speaking between
the

the feelings which she ascribed as incidental to the situation of Villars, and those which her own often unavoidably gave rise to, saddened and depressed her. Nor was this the whole subject of her reflections. Accustomed as she had been of late to paroxysms of ill humour in Mr. Seymour, she did not indeed attach all the importance to his words which they seemed to imply, but that something was veiled concerning the relationship between him and Charles Villars that pressed closely either on his honour or his conscience, hardly, she thought, admitted of doubt : and a remote, but very alarming one, had obtruded into her own mind, that urged her to a more particular investigation of the subject.

Bestowed as Julia had been at a very early age upon Mr. Seymour, she, of course, could know nothing of his previous connections or conduct. He had resided
many

many years in India : her parents were as little informed as herself of the events that had taken place there, nor was it possible for either to guess at the nature of the tie that might bind him to the mother of Villars. Observation had made it very clear to her that he rather feared than loved the latter ; yet in her eyes no being on earth was better calculated to be beloved. During the first period of his residence with them, Mr. Seymour's mind seemed often to stand rebuked in his presence, and to be sensible that it took a flight lower than that of the young man. This, however, was easily accounted for. Villars, when animated, was warm, energetic—sometimes eloquent : well-informed on most subjects, and capable of throwing over them that kind of light which a mind of vigour easily communicates when improved by education. Mr. Seymour possessed none of these advantages. He was indeed very far from
ignorant,

ignorant, but his understanding was contracted and rendered trifling by a constant attention to the trifles of the world. His politics, his pleasures, his religion, the little portion of it he professed, took merely the tone of the day, and were affectedly discussed in the jargon peculiar to it. He had sunk all individuality of character, if indeed he ever possessed any, precisely after the same manner both in his mind and his person; and always said, looked, and wore, what ten thousand besides were saying, looking, and wearing at the same moment: a sort of polygraphic copy of a man, that might be seen in some corner of almost every collection in London. Constant association with Villars evidently contributed to wear off the impression with respect to the latter under which he had at first laboured: nor had this transition of sentiment any thing in it either new or peculiar. The comparing power that so for-

cibly points out the distinction which penetrating minds are capable of discerning between themselves and those that are highly gifted, is always a leveller with common understandings; whose blunted perceptions distinguish merely the coarser lines of the human character, in which each individual necessarily resembles the other: and long acquaintance therefore only enables such persons to make the ingenious discovery, that they are much more like wise men than they had supposed themselves to be.

Mr. Seymour was exactly in this predicament. The advantages which Villars possessed over him either of nature or education, insensibly lost their value and consequence in his eyes in proportion as he measured them with those he displayed in his own person. From being silent and observing he had insensibly passed there-

fore to contradiction and occasional arrogance: but he never permitted either to exceed a certain limit; and the temperance or forbearance of Villars, qualities very uncongenial to his natural character, proved him perfectly sensible of the respect due to that of the other, without ever allowing him to forget what he owed to his own.

Ingenuous, gentle, and upright, as the mind of Julia originally was, the surmises that had so lately presented themselves could hardly find a permanent footing in it. Her marriage she was well assured was valid, solemn; public even to notoriety; nor did it seem possible that Mr. Scymour could so have disgraced himself in the eye of the world, as to have produced her thus openly in it, while conscious of any similar engagement detrimental either to her or her children. She thought better of his heart, and certainly better of his head,

than long to entertain the suspicion. Yet her natural gaiety was harassed and disturbed to a degree that made her impatient to enter upon some explanation with Villars himself: though such was the delicate nature of the subject that she hardly knew how to introduce, or to treat it. But she determined not to remain in uncertainty, whichever might be the party she should apply to for the purpose of removing it. Mr. Villars came in, not long after.

Julia, in order to break from uneasy contemplations, had been writing to her mother. A sweet interest in the subject on which she chiefly wrote, had harmonised her feelings, and restored the easy and natural tone of her mind. She did not see him enter however without experiencing a painful degree of flutter, and though she continued to write, a fine glow that denoted internal agitation, diffused itself in-

sensibly over her cheek. Villars did not interrupt her, but leant musing against the window.

"You are certainly in love, Charles," said she, carelessly, and without looking at him. "You have sighed twenty times I believe in ten minutes." Villars hastily removed his eyes, which had been riveted upon her.

"*Out* of love much rather," said he,—
"with life at least."

"Nay, never quarrel with a beautiful picture because you have not yet discovered its best light.—The world is a very pleasant place."

"You have then found it so," said he, advancing to lean over the back of the sofa on which she was sitting.

"I don't

“ I don’t above half like your question. It is almost too serious, and touches a string which has just suffered a terrible jar. I will nevertheless speak to it fairly.—Why—yes then; I think I have found the world hitherto pleasant. *Only* pleasant however, and it is in danger of becoming woefully otherwise.—Do you know that we are going to make a most prodigious reformation in our domestic arrangements? Mr. Seymour and I are to keep sheep together for the rest of our lives.—In sober sadness, and most sad I fear as well as sober will the experiment prove, I am to retire with him into the country.”

“ Oh, what exquisite felicity!” exclaimed Villars, thrown wholly off his guard.

“ Enchanting!—With a Corydon of sixty! My dear Villars, you have really some very

extraordinary ideas ! but I am not quite convinced that Mr. Seymour and I shall fill up to perfection this outline of pastoral felicity."

"And what then induces you to resolve upon it."

"Obedience !"—and she held up the hand on which was her wedding ring ; by an impulse that seemed irresistible, Villars snatched and kissed it.

"You are more grateful, I see, than your father," said she laughing.

"My father !" repeated he. Julia blushed at her own inadvertency, yet raised her eyes with quickness to observe its effect on his features. To her utter astonishment she perceived that it took none ; and an immediate conviction flashed across her mind,

mind, that whatever was the secret attached to his birth, Villars himself was wholly ignorant of it. A strange confusion of ideas now at once assailed her.

“ Sit down,” said she, after a momentary pause, and pointing to a chair at some distance. “ We must have a little conversation together.” Villars complied, but he did not take the chair. The evident embarrassment of her manner, an embarrassment for which it was impossible he should properly account, together with that soft and variable blush which perplexing circumstances had called into her cheek, created in him so strong an emotion of pleasure and surprise as hardly left him power either to controul or dissemble his feelings. All considerations that did not immediately relate to them, vanished from his imagination. All existing objects but

herself from his eyes. Yet it was with the utmost difficulty that he understood what she said; the inadvertent expression she had used, passed wholly from his memory. It was her looks, her silence, that occupied him. The dangerous, intoxicating hope which he had so often sworn never to indulge, despite of himself engrossed his whole soul, and spoke in every glance. Could he dare to suppose it possible that it was his agitation which thus communicated itself to her?

Julia was in fact disconcerted to a degree which the occasion seemed hardly to justify: but that Villars should not know, nor conjecture himself to be the son of Mr. Seymour, presented so new and extraordinary a train of ideas to her mind, his conduct considered, as rendered it impossible for her to be immediately mistress of herself.

herself. She now felt, for the first time, that silence was embarrassing, and struggled to speak.

"Mr. Villars," said she—and broke off abruptly. Then, resuming her usual familiar tone. "My dear Charles," she added, "you and I are soon to part. Mr. Seymour has plans for you."——

"No, Madam," said Villars, starting from her with sudden recollection at the name of Mr. Seymour, yet as abruptly returning, "Mr. Seymour's plans are such as I cannot accede to.——I have already been a dependent once too often in my life. But if my ingratitude be a crime, I am at this moment expiating it most painfully;" and he again withdrew to the further end of the room.

"I do not understand you."

“ You are probably not informed then of the proposal made to me this morning by Mr. Seymour. It is such as I cannot accept. I will be no man’s pensioner, by whatever name besides the situation may be qualified. He has a project of sending me to India under patronage—*protection* he calls it!—where,—in I know not what character,—I am to render myself useful to I know not what persons. Let him add to the obligations he has already conferred that of giving me a commission:—to the East Indies—to the West—to any climate—any country—in any rank!—but let him give me the existence of a man, not of a slave, or allow me to find for myself that place in society to which my good or ill fortune may lead me.”

Vehemently and incoherently as Villars spoke, the tenor of his words at once explained to Julia all the meaning of the reproach

reproach which her husband had uttered, that she had made him a fine gentleman. What the situation might be that Mr. Seymour had proffered, she could not exactly understand; but it was evidently one which he considered as degrading; and which Mr. Seymour himself must have believed to be very far below the hopes and expectations he had contributed to raise, or he would not have forborne to mention it to her. Julia had now recovered her presence of mind. That earnest and impassioned attention on the part of Villars, which had, she hardly knew why, embarrassed and perplexed her, had been withdrawn by subsequent agitation of a different nature. He had quitted her side; he seemed lost in painful contemplations at a remote end of the apartment, and she had leisure to revolve the particulars on which she chiefly desired to converse with him.

“ Surely,

“Surely, Mr. Villars, you are agitated very unnecessarily.” And again she blushed, at the recollection that twice in five minutes she had called him *Mr. Villars*. “Whatever may be the obligations that Mr. Seymour has conferred on you, they ought neither to appear grievous nor humiliating: you can hardly doubt but that they are sanctioned either by friendship—or—nature.”

“What friendship could possibly exist between a boy of five years old and Mr. Seymour?”

“Hereditary kindness, perhaps.—Friendship for your parents.”—

“One of them I never knew:—nor did he.”

“But the other—you remember your mother.”—

“Not

"Not so. I remember my father indeed very distinctly."

Again Julia looked up with astonishment. Villars was silent. He seemed thoughtful, restless, and willing to get rid of every recollection but of some secret and painful one that engrossed him. Now and then he raised his eyes to hers, but withdrew them again as quickly, with an air of apprehension and self-distrust.

"Come—tell me your history," said she, forcing a smile; "we have lived together like the hero and heroine of a romance, without knowing each other. You have no faithful squire to relieve you from the office, so pray undertake it yourself."

"There is so little to tell!"—and he looked as if talking were irksome to him —

"The

“ The loss of my mother,” he at length added, perceiving that she persevered in expecting him to speak, “ I do not recollect. That of my father is still present to my memory : I had been from my birth the object of his fondest affection, and all the heart I *then* had was his.” He sighed, and made another pause. “ I can hardly, even to this hour, recollect the farewell he took of me, I believe he was delirious at the time, without an emotion that would disgrace me in any eyes but yours.”

“ Did he not then recommend you to the *guardianship* of Mr. Seymour ?”

“ They had little or no communication with each other, I believe. Mr. Seymour had been in Ireland some months when my father married, nor did he return from thence till after I was born :—he scarce knew, therefore, that such a being as myself

self existed ;—indeed I doubt whether he knew it at all, till he was on the point of sailing for India.”

“ Are you thought to resemble your father ? ”

“ Judge ! ” and he drew a miniature from his bosom. There needed not further evidence than the features afforded.—In truth the perfect security entertained by Villars himself, in whom her questions seemed to awaken no other idea than that she meant to indulge a kind interest in his concerns, had already removed the force of her suspicions.

“ One fact, at least, then, is ascertained,” exclaimed she, mentally : and her heart felt relieved from a strange weight of conjecture with respect to her own situation : in proportion as her apprehensions
on

on that subject diminished, her esteem for her husband necessarily increased.

“ You teach me,” said she, “ to think more highly of Mr. Seymour’s conduct than I have ever yet done.”

“ In all that respects Mr. Seymour’s conduct towards me, this last proposal excepted, you cannot think too highly of him. Whatever were my father’s professional abilities, he died at an age when he had but little to bequeath his son. I had no near relation: Mr. Seymour, with the most disinterested regard, rescued me, in childhood, from the hands of ignorance and vulgarity, and conferred the greatest of all obligations, that of cultivating my understanding, and of undertaking to point out my path in life. Kindness of manners is often the capricious offspring of temper and circumstances;
and

and cannot perhaps be wholly commanded, either on the side of the obliger or the obliged; but the considerate prudence that bestows real benefits, is a virtue of the heart, and makes claims which none but a worthless one will forget.—In whatever climate or country, therefore, I may hereafter be stationed, I shall carry with me such recollections”——He could not add a syllable further.

“ Dear Charles!”—and, touched with that candour in his character which, amidst so many contending emotions seemed irresistibly to assert itself, she extended her hand kindly towards him: he forbore to take it.

“ We are absolutely making a tragedy of our conversation,” added she, smiling as she dried her eyes. “ Now ought I,

as in duty bound, to tell you *my* history: but I believe it is as well left untold. Time and chance, Villars, do strange things in this world: good, however, as well as bad:—*your* good is probably to come. Yet allow me to justify this last project of Mr. Seymour's in your eyes, by assuring you, that he is really at this juncture extremely harassed and perplexed by the situation of his own affairs. How we have contrived to spend so much money, I cannot say, but he tells me that we have no more to spend. *I*, you know," she added ironically, "never cost him any thing!—The situation, therefore, he has offered you, is perhaps rather the best within his power, than within his will to secure. I will talk to him however further concerning it, and if it is really one which you ought not to fill, rely upon me for some more agreeable project."

The

The conversation then turned on lighter subjects, but Villars was still absent and distant. Julia's spirits, on the contrary, rose with most elastic gaiety. She was pleased with her husband: she was deeply interested for Villars. The world, viewed through the medium of her own disposition of mind, seemed all bright and delightful to her. She thought of nothing but of conferring obligation, of making happy, and of leading every one within her circle through a sportive labyrinth of pleasure and vivacity. Even her Arcadian scheme amused her; and had Mr. Seymour been present, she would have been very likely to have tried the experiment made upon Marmontel's Philosopher, and tied a ribbon, *coulour de rose*, round his neck.

Mr. Seymour, however, was far differently engaged. On leaving her, he had retired to an apartment on the ground-

floor, which he called his study. A variety of gloomy suspicions perplexed and irritated him. The manner in which Villars had rejected his proposal of the morning, convinced him that he had been too dilatory in pursuing his measures with a man who, by mingling in the world had now insensibly acquired a knowledge of his own powers and ability of acting. It had been, from the first, Mr. Seymour's intention to remove Villars to some distance from him ; but the circumstance that obtruded the latter into the house, had been wholly unforeseen, and his own irresolution had allowed him to remain there. Day had followed day, and month, month, without offering any situation for the young man, but such as it was necessary to purchase : and this, Mr. Seymour, who conceived it to be a measure always within his power to adopt, and whose liberality was of that kind that never

extends to personal inconvenience, had delayed doing, even at the hazard of some ill consequences to himself. The suspicions meantime that occupied his mind with regard to his wife, directed to the gay, the elegant, the fashionable men of the day, the only men who, according to his modes of thinking, were likely to prove dangerous, had never rested for a moment upon Villars. But he had persuaded himself that Julia would not accede to his plan of retirement, and her negative was to decide the truth of his surmises. Considering her as a creature of habit and temper only, it was indeed little likely that she should comply: for in her habits and temper she frequently betrayed haughtiness, levity, and a proud confidence in herself, that would not patiently endure controul. Mr. Seymour had not judgment enough to perceive, that under these defects she possessed a comprehensive understanding, as well as a ge-

nerous heart; and that he had only to satisfy the one, and touch the other, in order to obtain the assent he demanded from her. Of this he made no calculation, and the sacrifice to his will therefore astonished him. Her subsequent tender expressions with regard to Villars, whose dismissal it was his intention that she should appear to cause, fell like a thunderbolt upon his mind, with the united force of jealousy and conviction, and seemed at once to explain the enigma which he had before been unable to solve. He understood why the gay world was thus suddenly become indifferent to her; he perceived, according to his own judgment, a deep scene of past and future disgrace attached to him; and he a thousand times execrated the many entanglements which he too well saw he had created for himself, and which left him, on this occasion, no better resource than dissimulation.

While

While buried in ruminations of this nature, he heard a knock at the street-door, which he knew to be that of Villars; who had dined abroad, or rather had in fact not dined at all; but had chosen, after the conversation of the morning, to avoid Mr. Seymour's table, in order that he might not betray the deep chagrin, as well as the hopeless suffering, that preyed upon his mind. Seymour heard him run up stairs, after inquiring who was in the drawing-room, with an alacrity that roused his own irritable passions, to a degree that he could hardly controul. It was because he could hardly controul them, that he did not follow. It had been his intention to spend the evening abroad, but he now found it impossible to resolve on quitting his own house; and he therefore remained stationary, in a state of mind that grew every moment more gloomy. Several hours elapsed, yet neither Julia nor Villars quitted the

drawing-room, or seemed to think of any thing but each other. The servants, however, passed and repassed as usual, without any appearance of mystery; and on the frequent opening of the door, Mr. Seymour, at a late hour, caught the sound of the flute.

Had Julia's discretion taught her to stop at the point of kindness, obligation, and good humour in which she found herself after the explanation with Villars, all, as far as respected her conduct, had been well: but she was now unaccustomed to limit her influence by any steady and decided rule. To animate, to charm, to dazzle, was become habitual to her: she was nothing in her own eyes when she was not every thing: without foreseeing either the danger to herself, or the more obvious one to the heart of Villars, she gave way therefore to the impulse of the moment.

moment. Sprightly, elegant, bewitching, she insensibly departed from the character of the sweet and tender friend, the innocent-minded, yet dignified wife, and became once more the Armida, the captivating sorceress, that had almost overwhelmed his better reason. The mind of Villars, hitherto guarded by honour, and saddened by recent recollections, nevertheless took, imperceptibly, the colour of hers. How correct ought the conduct of woman to be, when the character of man becomes thus pliant under its influence! A few moments before, she had made him candid, generous, and capable of commanding himself!—In a very short period from that time, he was in danger of becoming an ingrate and a villain; while, without its being possible that she should be ignorant of the state of his heart, she seemed to take a gay and thoughtless pleasure in asserting absolute sway there. After
trifling

trifling till she could trifle no longer, she had, at length, recourse to music. The airs they had formerly tried, those they yet intended to decide upon, all were turned over : nothing was pursued, nothing engrossed them but each other ; and Julia, at length, to her infinite surprize, discovered that it was past one in the morning. She now inquired whether Mr. Seymour was come home, and found that he had not been abroad.

“ He is sulky with both of us,” said she, turning to Villars, with the most indiscreet gaiety : “ but I shall talk him into good-humour in the morning.”—So has said many a thoughtless wife, who never talked her husband into good humour again.

The next day Mrs. Seymour was to give an assembly, which was preceded by
a splendid

a splendid dinner. The domestic circle saw therefore little of each other. Mr. Villars was indeed almost the whole evening near her, but he had no opportunity of engrossing her attention ; and, although she frequently spoke to him, their conversation was broken and trifling. Looks of familiarity however, of which neither were conscious, passed between them, with respect to the persons and things around. Mr. Seymour lost none of these : and they sealed his opinion.

Villars did not appear at her breakfast table next morning, as it had been hitherto his custom to do ; and, on inquiry, she learnt that he had breakfasted by appointment with her husband, at an earlier hour than that at which she was visible, and had since gone abroad. Mr. Seymour came up stairs not long after. His air was extremely

tremely placid, and his salutation, if not very kind, at least very civil.

“ You have carried off Villars this morning,” said she—“ I hope to a good purpose. What have you resolved to do for him?”

“ Oblige him his own way, since he will not be obliged in mine :—promised him a commission.”

“ You are quite adorable!—Where is the regiment to be stationed?”

“ At St. Domingo.”

“ Gracious God! Mr. Seymour you would not premeditatedly send him to his grave? Do you not know that two-thirds at least of the last detachment are buried there?”

“ I may

“ I may be permitted to doubt the fact. —Granting it to be true, there is more room in the world for the survivors.” — Julia raised her eyes to Heaven in speechless indignation.

“ I understand the eloquence of your looks, Madam. But Mr. Villars may, I presume, be allowed to decide for himself, and *he* makes no objection. He is heroic enough to profess not to value life.”

“ Did he say so?” said Julia, with emotion. Mr. Seymour made no answer.

“ What rank is he to hold?” continued she, after a pause. — Seymour named it. She mused, without replying, for a few moments, and then directed the conversation to other subjects; affecting to run gaily over twenty different ones, many of which

which she knew to be unpleasant, and some very provoking to Mr. Seymour. Her carriage being then ready, she got into it, and drove out for the morning. The dinner was late, and only the family party sat down to table. Mr. Seymour was complacent, though not talkative. Villars looked ill and harassed. Julia alone was apparently herself, gay and entertaining. When the servants were withdrawn, she looked earnestly at Villars with a conscious half smile.

“ Charles,” said she, “ I am going to put your discretion to a very nice test. You must decide between man and wife. Mr. Seymour offers you a commission at St. Domingo, where you may, most heroically, die of the yellow fever. I have one secured for you in England, where you may live in inglorious safety—speak for yourself.”

“ I am not entitled to do so, Madam,” replied Villars without hesitation, but with an emotion which he could not conquer.—
“ Mr. Seymour must speak for me.”

“ You are not, I conclude, in the habit of rejecting a Lady’s favors, Sir,” said Mr. Seymour, but his countenance changed greatly as he spoke. Villars did not however look at him. He pressed his hand, with an air of suffering, upon his forehead, and leant for a moment upon the table ; As if taking counsel of his own heart, rather than like a person who either heard or noticed, what was passing before him.

“ The air of St. Domingo may perhaps do best for me,” said he, at length ; and with a slight salutation to both, he arose and quitted the room. Julia felt indignant : she also felt a little embarrassed. Without previously weighing the impropriety or danger
of

of the situation in which she placed Villars, she had depended upon his unqualified acceptance of any offer from her, and she had fixed her own determination to encounter the consequent resentment or ill humour of Mr. Seymour; both of which however, as the commission was to cost him nothing, she concluded would be temporary. Her courage nevertheless a little failed on finding herself thus suddenly alone with him. His looks denoted bitter wrath; to her great surprise however he uttered not a word, but coolly took out his pocket-book, and began to make various memorandums there with a pencil.

“Are you writing verses?” said she, striving to speak with unconcern.

“Not exactly that. I am making a calculation.”

“You

"You chuse your time and place well" she replied, with a tone of raillery.

"Impossible to chuse them better. When a man gets in with one friend, it is time he should release himself from his obligations to another.—Charles Villars is, I see, about two hundred pounds in my debt."

"Which he can pay at a word," said she, smiling.

"Which he will certainly pay, before he accepts the situation you offer him, Madam."

"What is it you mean?"

"That it will be prudent in you to find some excuse for disappointing the gentleman of his commission, or that his first

station will be in the house of a sheriff's officer."

"It is not possible that you should be in earnest?"

"Most solemnly so."

"And may I not tell him that the disapprobation"—

"No, Madam. You have your secrets it appears—I have mine.—It is your part now to send him to St. Domingo."

"That I will never do," said she, "be the hazard what it may."

"Not though it were that of your own reputation, and your child's legitimacy?"

"I don't

"I don't understand you!"—and "a thousand innocent shames" passed over her countenance in a moment.

"You *look* as if you did not Madam," replied he bitterly.

"Mr. Seymour," she exclaimed, bursting into a passion of tears, "tell me at once what it is you mean, what it is you suspect?"

"I do not *suspect*, Madam; mine is conviction: but I warn you that I will no longer be a passive witness of my own disgrace."

"Surely nothing less than madness can induce you to accuse me of an improper partiality for a man whom, till within these two days, I believed to be your son?"

"You have doubtless discovered the contrary *only* within the last two days."

"Heaven is my witness, that I never even suspected it sooner!"

"Now, at least, then, you know it, Madam; acquit yourself therefore in the opinion of the world, and, as far as may be, in that of your husband. Let it be by *your* desire that he goes to St. Domingo."

"No, Sir!"—I have said it—I will abide all perils rather.—If acquiescence, indeed, will content you—dreadful, afflicting as it will be to me under these provocations to acquiesce"—

"It will *not* content me, Madam. I have now considered the matter, and find that it will be most discreet—most suitable—and, as *I believe*, most *conclusive*, that
you

you should do again what you have undone.—Your persuasion, not my commands must determine him.”

“ Then he will never be determined.”

“ You know the danger !”—

“ I despise it,” replied she, haughtily.—
“ You may be unjust enough, if you please, to attempt to disgrace your wife, and to shut up Mr. Villars in a prison ; but I dare affirm that you will never induce either the one or the other to depart from what conscience and honour may dictate.—Have *you* no sense of either, Sir, when you venture to propose this cruel plan ?”

“ Madam !” — said Mr. Seymour, and again his countenance changed greatly.

“ And now, Sir, for the alternative I shall offer. . Either resolve to do justice to me, and act candidly by Villars—either receive my solemn asseverations of innocence, and restore to me that place in your esteem which my conduct has never forfeited, or expect me to seek another protector than yourself, and another place of refuge than your house!——Decide, Sir!”

“ I *have* decided, Madam, and adhere to my first determination.”

Unable to control the excess of her emotion, and too proud to permit that he should witness it, she cast upon him a look of the most unqualified scorn, and rushed hastily out of the parlour into the drawing-room, where the first person she encountered was Villars, who had been walking about there from the moment he left them.

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On hearing a footstep, he had approached the door in order to make his own escape, and they were close to each other before either suspected it. Villars uttered an exclamation at sight of her, and extended his arms, for she tottered like a person who was fainting.

“ Oh, Charles !” she exclaimed, and threw herself into them.

“ What has happened ?—What is it has alarmed you ?” cried he eagerly.

“ Nothing, said she, nothing !—but I am going to quit the house this moment.”

“ For what purpose ? Whither would you go ?”

“Any where—so I may get rid of my husband and of myself!”—and without the least recollection or self-government, she wept upon his shoulder.

“Oh, let *me* then be your protector—let *me* be your guide,” cried Villars, wholly softened and overcome. “Is there a grief you can suffer that I would not hazard my life to avert?—From the moment we first met I have lived only in you, and for you!”—and with the most impassioned urgency he repeated his solicitation.

The occasion now presented itself that was to decide the character of Mrs. Seymour's mind. Irritated on one side—softened on the other, with an inflamed spirit and a disappointed heart, perceiving, not merely in the language, but in the countenance of Villars, and in his broken
tones,

tones, a passion strong enough to make him snap all those ties which seemed hitherto more precious to him than life itself, a wavering sensibility created by circumstances, for an instant inclined the balance to the wrong side. In talking to Mr. Seymour of a refuge and a protection distinct from his, she had referred only to that home and that mother from whom he took her. — But another home, another protection, now presented themselves to her imagination, in colours but too well calculated to seduce it.

“Leave me Mr. Villars,” said she, feebly repulsing him. — “I intreat — nay, I command you to leave me.” — Then, breaking away by a vigorous effort, “Charles,” she added, turning to him with a self-recollection that gave a sweet serenity to her countenance, “I am neither ungrateful nor insensible. — For a moment I, like
you,

you have forgotten what was due to prudence — to Mr. Seymour, and to myself — but the error has been only momentary. Neither you nor I are of a character to live self-condemned, and therefore we must part.” — The sound of a footstep on the stairs obliged them to separate immediately. It was only that of a servant. Villars quitted the house, and Julia retired to her own apartment.

Again Mr. Villars wandered silent, and half distracted, solitary amidst multitudes, through numberless streets, revolving his past and his future conduct. He stood indeed self-condemned: but he could hardly be said to feel remorse, since conscious that a similar temptation would again produce a similar error. While engaged in this painful retrospection, he, at length, perceived that time had insensibly passed away: and the recollection that, whatever

were his feelings, it was impossible for him to break thus abruptly from every habit of social life, induced him reluctantly to turn his steps towards home. Having entered the house, he had neither resolution to inquire of the servants what part of the family was in the drawing-room, nor to satisfy himself on the subject in person, but passed into a parlour that was near the hall. He felt relieved however on perceiving that Mr. Seymour had quitted the adjoining one, which was the eating-room, and that consequently he should escape a meeting, which he found it impossible to encounter with any self-possession.

Here, a just, though painful, examination of his conduct, and of his obligations to Mr. Seymour, began at length to subdue the fever of the passions. Madly, blindly devoted as he was to Julia, it was impossible for him to disguise from himself that

that her behaviour had been indiscreet, and that his own had been dishonourable. He did not hope to retrieve the past, at least as far respected the latter, if he permitted himself to see her again;—and *not* to see her—all of life or man within him, seemed to shrink from the effort. Yet, pass a few days only, and the whole might be decided. He was persuaded that he should find no difficulty in accelerating Mr. Seymour's measures for securing his departure from England; the metropolis he might perhaps almost immediately quit; and by plunging into the necessary occupations of a military life, even if the regiment did not immediately embark, he might, at least, so fill up the intervening time till it did, as to keep in view the great object to which, after Mrs. Seymour, his thoughts were incessantly directed. Death is the constant wish, and desired refuge of hearts unpractised in

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in sorrow, and yet ignorant how dearly they are to purchase, by a prolonged and well-sustained warfare, the privilege of dying as they ought.

Honour and reason having at length succeeded in restoring some degree of equanimity to the mind of Mr. Villars, considerations, less important, but deeply interesting to his pride, now took their place in it. He knew that he inherited a very small patrimony, the management of which had been resigned into the hands of Mr. Seymour, by the persons to whom the charge of his health and safety, after the loss of his father, had, by accident rather than choice, devolved. His father had died young, and somewhat suddenly, in a provincial town, where his professional views had stationed him, and very remote from the county in which he had passed his early life. He had had no opportunity

nity to arrange his worldly concerns, or to do more than commit both them, and his infant son, to the care of the worthiest people within his circle. They had discharged the trust kindly, though ignorantly: but they willingly gave it up to a relation so opulent and so generous as they conceived Mr. Seymour to be. Villars greatly feared that the latter must have expended more than the income of his own very small fortune in the education which he had allotted him. In this, however, he was mistaken. Mr. Seymour, although he loved ostentation, yet knew perfectly well the value of money, and, except in the article of preparation for India, had spent very little more upon Villars than the latter was well entitled to claim. His arrangements had nevertheless been fortunate, as well as economical; for he had placed him in situations where it was possible for him to do much by his own

own exertion in the acquirement of knowledge; and the young man, having no other pursuit or use for life, had amply availed himself of his opportunities.

Whether Mr. Villars's calculations however were, or were not just, with respect to Mr. Seymour's expenditure, he well knew that the little principal of his fortune had hitherto remained untouched: and, small as it might prove, his pride, as well as the situation of his feelings in other respects, induced him earnestly to desire that it might be applied to any present occasion, in order to obviate the necessity of plunging deeper in painful obligation. Yet how, without affixing upon himself the imputation of ingratitude, was he to demand any thing from the justice of a man to whose kindness he was so deeply indebted? He was lost in ruminations of this nature, when a servant opened the
door,

door, and told him that a person was in the hall, who, not finding Mr. Seymour at home, wished much to see him.

“ He inquired,” added the man, “ for *Master Villars*, Sir, but I suppose he can only mean you.” He had hardly finished his sentence, in the delivery of which he had some difficulty to command his risible muscles, when the inquirer, who had followed close upon him, made his appearance. Villars did not remember ever to have seen him before, neither indeed would the stranger easily have remembered that he had ever seen Villars. Nor was he a little surprised at finding the young gentleman whom he had inquired for as a boy, was a well-grown man; apparently older than his real years, and very capable, by his appearance, of imposing respect upon a much more important personage than his visitor seemed to be.

Many ejaculations, apologies, and testimonies of unpolished but sincere kindness, followed the ceremony of the stranger's entrance; from the general purport of whose address Villars learned that he was a tenant of Mr. Seymour's, who having travelled, for the first time in his life, two hundred miles up to London, upon a law business, thought it necessary to pay his respects to his landlord before he quitted town. Why he should deem it necessary to pay his respects to *him* also, Villars did not so easily understand, nor was he in the humour to inquire. But that goodnatured loquacity which is more frequently found in country manners than in those of the town, because, as the distinctions of rank are there more decided, and less liable to be confounded, it of course finds greater indulgence, did not allow him to remain long in ignorance, either upon that, or indeed any other point to

which his visitor conceived himself competent to speak. He had now got the better of the impression of awe or surprise that attended his introduction, and began to be very diffuse upon the satisfaction he felt on hearing, after his arrival in town, a confused report of the residence of Villars with Mr. Seymour.—A circumstance which, from some odd prepossession or other, he seemed to consider as an amazing advancement. From this subject he travelled back to the scenes and period of Villars's infancy, with a wild motley sort of interest, which, while it proved him to be perfectly familiar with all he described, was compounded at once of the kind and the ludicrous.

Villars, who felt that a heart might be worthy and a head not barren, though the individual to whom they belonged wore a coarse appearance, made a greater effort over himself in his favour, than he would,

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at that juncture have done for a much more important person; and strove to be civil and attentive. But the struggle was painful; and he saw, with chagrin, that a silence on his part, which he could with difficulty prevail upon himself, at intervals, to break, was in danger of looking extremely like pride, to his visitor. The latter, at length, took up his hat and stick, and seemed every moment on the point of departing. He had not yet, however, exhausted his stock of eloquence or curiosity, and the attention he bestowed upon the room in which they sat, seemed as if he was not a little inclined to take a survey of the rest of the mansion.

“A fine house, Sir,—the Squire lives away, I see,” said he, stopping once more to look around him, after having, to the great relief of his companion, advanced a few steps towards the door.

“ Mr. Seymour has both power and will to do so,” replied Villars.

“ A happy man, Sir !”

“ He has his cares, like other people, no doubt !” again rejoined Villars, though somewhat impatiently.

“ They must be of his own making then, I guess. What—perhaps he wants an heir !”—Villars motioned with his head, in token of assent.

“ Well !—the want don’t break *your* heart, I suppose. But pray may I ask,” added he, very significantly, “ whether he keeps you in his house for that reason ?”

“ What can you possibly mean by the question ?” returned Villars, with the greatest surprise.

“ Only that he is very generous if he does.”

“ I don't understand you ; you seem either drunk or impertinent, Sir.”

“ No offence,—no offence,” exclaimed the other, still drawing a few steps nearer to the door. “ I meant no harm, and I see none. You need not be so close, sure ! Most people will be of my mind, whether you are or no, that the man who keeps his next heir in the house, like a gentleman, does the handsome thing by him.”

“ I am not heir to Mr. Seymour,” replied Villars, recovering his temper.

“ Well ! May be not !—May be you're afore—may be after him.—I don't wish to talk of any secrets.—You may be doing the prudent thing, for aught I know to the

contrary. Law, to be sure, is but a ticklish business; and if the old gentleman means to give you your rights after his death, why, as he's pretty far advanced I suppose, the less said about it in the mean time the better."

"You are under some mistake: I am but distantly related to Mr. Seymour," said Villars, stepping forward, without further ceremony, to open the parlour door,

"Bless you, I am not talking of your relationship to *him*, but to the estate. I know well enough how near you are to each other. Your grandfather and his were both akin to our old Squire as was: only his was *second* cousin, I take it, and yours was *first*: that's all the difference between you." And again he nodded significantly.

"Are you sure of what you say?" said Villars, with extreme surprise.

"Why

“ Why not, as I may say, fartin fure in law ; but I have heard so ever since you were a little strip of a boy, when the old family were in the manor-house, and your father and mother lived in our neighbourhood. To think what a power of children there was then to inherit the estate, and how they all died off ! Nobody made any count of you, nor our present Squire here, at that time : then your father went to settle in distant parts, I believe, and so we lost sight of you.”

“ Can you recollect any person that is likely to give me certain information on this subject ?”

“ Why, there’s one Atkinson as used to manage affairs a pretty while ago. He and the steward did not seem to hit it much upon the occasion of the old Squire’s death : so now he lives a matter of sixty

miles off us. Perhaps he'll tell all he knows when he's axed: perhaps more. 'Twas but t'other day that I passed his house, as I was coming up to town: so I thought it but neighbourly to look in upon him; and he was a faying—says he—"I wonder what in the world is become of young Master Villars!"

"What is this person's employment? Is he a lawyer?"

"A bit of one."

"Surely I recollect him."

"Ten to one but you may: you knew him well enough before you went out of our neighbourhood."

"He comes confusedly across my memory like one seen in a dream:" said Villars

lars to himself. "It must have been as long ago as in my mother's life-time that I knew him!—" An excellent fellow!—he has carried me on his back a thousand times!"—Can you give me his address?"

"Can I give you what?"

"Give me a direction to this Atkinson?"

"Yes, yes, I can give you that easy enough! but have a care, Sir, what you go about!—Possession, they say, is eleven points of the law; and so, seeing that you have got no natural friends to stand up for you, and your pockets I suppose are not very well lined, I don't know that you can do better than continue to curry favour here."

"I thank you both for your caution and your visit," said Villars. "Only give me
Atkin-

Atkinson's direction, and trust to my own prudence for the rest."—The man complied, and took his leave with much rustic civility; assuring him that he should not forget to give young Mr. Villars' kind service to all friends in the country.

Villars was now less capable than before of deciding upon his own future conduct, or of seeing Julia: indeed of seeing any one. If the intelligence which his visitor had communicated were true, there could be no doubt but his own right of relationship superseded Mr. Seymour's: even if incorrect, it was of force to create strong suspicion that he was himself the reversionary heir, if not immediate claimant to the estate. In the disturbed situation of his mind no eligible measure presented itself, but that of again quitting the house, with a resolution not to return to it till such an hour as should preclude his meeting with Mr. Seymour.

Seymour. He cast his eyes anxiously up to the windows of Julia's dressing room as he passed : sighed, loitered irresolutely, and, after a fruitless delay, at length slowly wandered on. Could he have known that that apartment, nay even the house, no longer contained her, how great would have been his alarm and astonishment !—Yet so it was,

Mrs. Seymour, while contending with the stronger feelings of her mind, had not conquered the subordinate ones ; nor had she discretion enough to recollect the necessity of conquering them. A chaste and delicate sense of what was due to her sex, and to the fundamental laws of religion and morality, was so much a part of her character as not to have been wholly expelled from it even by the trying circumstances in which she had placed herself : But habit had taught her a haughty indifference

to appearances, and inspired a confidence in her own attractions that inclined her to believe she might do any thing with impunity that did not shock or offend her immediate sense of right. The resolution which she had announced to Mr. Seymour she therefore resolved to abide by. Her maid had a married sister, who kept a ready-furnished house in Lower Brook street. Both the house, and the person who owned it, were of the first order of such as are to be hired ; and Mrs. Seymour, on retiring to her own apartment, began instantly to make arrangements for removing thither. The house was not engaged, and by her order her maid caused it to be prepared for her. She also put together such trifles as were immediately necessary for her Lady's accommodation, and for a residence of a few days. Julia, followed by her, then stepped into the carriage ; and leaving a note upon her dressing table,

with

with directions that it should be given to Mr. Seymour whenever he inquired for her, was set down at the door of her new habitation within two hours from the period at which she had parted with her husband in the eating parlour. In this habitation she purposed to remain till the time that her mother and sister should arrive in town; and if the interference of the former did not bring Mr. Seymour to such acknowledgments with regard to the injustice of his own suspicions, and consequent behaviour, as might satisfy both herself and her friends, she resolved to return to him no more.

Such, Julia persuaded herself, was her determined plan, and such her expectation. Yet the first was perhaps fluctuating, the second certainly so. However plausible the arguments which a temporary resentment now dictated, she yet did not entertain

tain any reasonable or permanent belief that Mr. Seymour would permit her thus to deprive him of what she well knew had been for many years the ornament of his house, and consequently the chief pride of his life, in herself. She had indeed little reliance on his love : it was, unfortunately, because love had not been a bond of union between them, that all the present misery had arisen, and all the chance of the future had been incurred. Mr. Seymour when he made his election in life had not chosen a companion, a friend, in a word, a wife : one whom he could believe it possible should ever be disinterestedly attached to him : but a mere expensive bauble to decorate his house with, and outshine his acquaintance. He could make no such second purchase : and although Julia seldom considered her own fate, or his conduct, in this very bitter point of view, for bitterness was not a marking feature of her character,

rafter, yet the irritated state of her feelings would not allow her now to overlook it. After having, as she supposed she should do, reduced Mr. Seymour to reason and temperance of conduct, it was her firm intention to make the best of their mutual lot : if it could not be happy, yet, if possible, to avoid rendering it miserable ; and to console herself, by the sweets of maternal love, for all she had missed in life besides.

Decided and sanguine with regard to these various suppositions, she sat down to write to her mother and sister. The tenor of her letters to both, as far as respected herself, was uniformly the same, and the subjects on which she wrote too copious, as well as too interesting, not to engage her for a considerable time. Her letters were at length finished, and she had no longer any occupation but that of examining

ing more coolly than before, the occurrences of the day. Neither the examination, nor the sensations which from the influence of trifling circumstances took place in her mind, were favourable to tranquillity. When, for the first time, she looked leisurely around, and found herself solitary—comparatively unprotected, in a house not familiar to her, and, however convenient, yet very, very far inferior to that she was accustomed to inhabit; with no train of servants—no chance of visitors or domestic circle to break the uniformity and silence of a long evening; when coach rolled after coach past her door, and knock followed knock at the doors of those around, yet Mr. Seymour appeared not, nor even sent to inquire concerning her, the tide of vanity and self-elation, which but a few hours before had flowed so high, began rapidly to subside. In vain did she summon her reason to resist the force of
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local impressions: the solitude of the heart was not to be so soothed. She listened — she wept — she considered — in fine, she repented: but it was three o'clock in the morning, and her repentance availed not. She threw herself on the bed, much indisposed; and striving to recal the fleeting resentments which had induced her conduct, as well as the hopes that encouraged her to pursue it, she looked with longing eyes for daylight, and at length, soon after it dawned, closed them in temporary but uneasy slumber.

Mr. Seymour, on parting with his wife, had quitted his house in a state of mind no less indignant than that in which he had left her. Secretly conscious of the dangerous predicament in which he stood with Villars, and harassed, for some time past, by the apprehension of such a discovery as during his own absence had in fact really

occurred with respect to the claims of the latter to the estate, it had been his earnest wish to make her the instrument of driving the young man into the obscurity from which she had so unexpectedly rescued him: nor could he sufficiently regret that irresolution on his own part, had prevented him, in the first instance, from interposing his authority to exclude him the house.

Mr. Seymour's situation was now indeed altogether critical. The embarrassed state of his affairs had induced him, before he went to India, to calculate every contingency that might affect his future fortune. It therefore did not escape him that Villars, however remote the prospect then appeared, might one day materially interfere with it. By constituting himself guardian, both to the person and property of the latter, he hoped to disqualify him for

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any struggle in his own favour, should unforeseen chances discover his claims; claims at that time so little likely to be realised, as to have had no place in the expectations of his father, and to be utterly unknown to the humble protectors of his infancy. Events had verified Mr. Seymour's calculations: but his caution dictated to him still to continue the friend and apparent benefactor of the young man; that, attached by those ties, the latter might never be tempted to seek for either elsewhere. Nor was Mr. Seymour's heart so wholly tainted as to meditate crushing Villars to absolute penury; for few men are completely villains at once: the speck becomes a gangrene only in proportion as we administer to the distemper. It was really his wish to provide for him in some station abroad, and he had brought him to London with that intention: nor when there, did he treat him either un-

kindly or ungenerously, though to be liberal was not in his nature. The first blow that defeated Mr. Seymour's plans was the accident that introduced Villars to his house. It brought his own professions of kindness towards him to a trial equally unexpected and dangerous; and when the unlooked-for proposal of rendering him an inmate there occurred, consciousness at once made him apprehend that the act of putting his negative upon so simple and natural a testimony of regard, could hardly fail to excite disgust, or awaken suspicion. He had therefore no alternative but to resolve on sending him quickly from England. Time, however, insensibly elapsed in unforeseen delays. The danger with which we are familiar, loses its power over the imagination; and it operated less and less upon his, in proportion as he perceived that the error into which Julia, as well as the whole of his family had fallen, with

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regard

regard to the birth of the young man, was in the highest degree favourable to his own private views, by arresting all curiosity as to their object. It had therefore been his choice indirectly to countenance the opinion that Villars was his son, although he was too cautious to affirm what the inadvertent testimony of the latter might at once have confuted. He now saw, with the most bitter mortification, that he had, as he believed, been caught in his own snare. That while he had been looking abroad for evil, it had taken deep root within his very doors; and that by a malice of fortune, that made him at once ridiculous and miserable, the estate which it had cost him both his conscience and his honour to appropriate, was in danger of being transmitted, under cover of his name, to the child of the very man from whom it had been fraudulently alienated.

Reflections of this kind engrossed Mr. Seymour's mind during his absence from home. He returned thither between ten and eleven o'clock, and had address enough to inform himself, without appearing to do so, from the porter, that his wife was abroad. Retiring to his study, he there affected to be occupied in writing, and made no further inquiry concerning her. The project which, in a moment of resentment she had announced as an alternative between them, had made no serious impression on his mind; and he did not entertain the smallest doubt but that her habitual gaiety and volatility of character had easily induced her to fulfil some common engagement. When one o'clock approached he could however no longer resist the impulse of his curiosity, and in a careless manner, he inquired where, and at what hour, Mrs. Seymour had ordered her carriage. The note she had left for him

him was then put into his hands. It was not because the servants were out of the secret of what had passed, that it had been hitherto kept back; but they were by no means clear whether their master suspected it or no; nor were they impatient to inform him. Her own woman being absent, they therefore abided by the letter of their lady's orders, and not, as she supposed they would do, by the spirit; which would naturally have induced them to give him the note as soon as he came in. Mr. Seymour, on reading it, poured out a denunciation of the most alarming kind against his wife, and, indeed, against his whole household; nor had he, in the intemperance of the moment, recollection enough to avoid including Villars in his wrath. This nevertheless awakened not any suspicion in those around, except that the young man, involved in some domestic quarrel, had naturally sided with the wife, who,

without relationship, was kind to him, in preference to the husband who, under contrary circumstances, was often much otherwise. Mr. Seymour concluded his burst of passion by ordering his doors to be closed for the night, and neither Mrs. Seymour nor Villars to be admitted, should either appear. Mrs. Seymour, indeed, her own note informed him, had chosen her residence in a house which he had seen, though he had never entered it; and Villars, he hardly doubted, was either openly or indirectly her companion.

Mr. Villars's time was however far differently occupied. That more temperate frame of mind, to which reflection and circumstances had partly restored him, was perhaps confirmed less by the effect of either, than by a sort of fallen desperation with which he had prepared himself to acquit all he owed to Mr. Seymour, by
leaving

leaving his native country, and the only object that he believed would be dear to him in any. The singular discovery which had recently presented itself, threw indeed a new light over his situation, but it did not remove an almost insupportable weight from his heart : neither, after cool consideration, had he much reliance upon intelligence so vague ; and founded only on the report of persons whose recollections were in all probability extremely incorrect. The story nevertheless bore some semblance of truth ; and, if true, accounted for various instances of forbearance and generosity in Mr. Seymour's conduct, that were not very consonant with his general character. Villars had therefore retired to a neighbouring coffee-house, from whence he wrote to Atkinson. The clock struck one, when, in pursuance of his wish of not being seen, he knocked at Mr. Seymour's door. The servants admitted him instantly,

instantly, notwithstanding their master's prohibition; which, in fact, they considered, and represented, in no other light than as the consequence of a temporary displeasure. That Villars could be an object of *jealousy* to Mr. Seymour, was of all circumstances least likely to occur either to them or to him. For as the suspicions conceived by the latter had, without passing through any gradation, at once reached their climax, they had not previously occasioned those inequalities in his conduct, which might have led common observers to penetrate its motives. During the last three days he had been indeed unusually retired, irritable, and morose; but he had not rendered himself remarkable by departing from the habits of external civility; and Villars, least of any person, could surmise that he had a share in exciting the spleen or resentment of a man who, while his own affairs were confessedly deranged,

deranged, yet occupied himself in his service. It was indeed among the severest reproaches inflicted on Villars by his own mind, to believe that Mr. Seymour relied implicitly upon him with respect to his wife: but of Mr. Seymour he now thought no longer. The intelligence he received from the servants concerning Julia, awakened again all those heart-tearing emotions which he had lately, by so much effort, subdued. Uncertain what he ought to hope from a measure thus dangerous and precipitate on her part, he returned to the coffee-house which he had so lately quitted; where, without wasting a thought on any other subject, he passed the remainder of the night in a conflict of the passions that admitted not of any repose.

Weak as Villars was, however, in the presence of Mrs. Seymour, the more honourable part of his character was neither
wholly

wholly extinguished nor dormant. The romantic wish which he had so long indulged, he now perceived the folly and impossibility of gratifying. To have sheltered her in his arms, in his heart ; to have guarded her happiness or her reputation at the hazard of his life, would have been a felicity most precious to him : but to become a deliberate seducer, to alienate her from the husband whose rights in that character, and possibly in every other, he was particularly bound to respect, and to degrade her from the rank in society she had long been accustomed to embellish, was a sort of systematic and desperate villainy of which he was not capable. The man who is weak is however always in danger of becoming a villain, and Mr. Villars, by exposing himself to the influence of a passion calculated to enfeeble his understanding and corrupt his heart, now nearly touched that point which the high tone
of

of romantic refinement had once induced him to believe it impossible he should ever approach.

As early as decency would permit the next morning he presented himself at Mrs. Seymour's door. But his most urgent solicitations obtained him no admittance there. Julia had now learnt to view her conduct with respect to him in a far different light from that in which it had hitherto appeared. She too had had leisure to weigh all he owed both to Mr. Seymour and to his own honour: nor was it the least of her afflictions to have trifled with that, as well as with his peace of mind; nay, possibly, in some degree endangered his safety: that she had ruined his fortune, believing as she firmly did, that it depended upon Mr. Seymour, she could hardly doubt. Yet, though cruelly alive to all these reflections, such was the nature

nature of her own situation that she could neither soothe nor confide in him. Neither see him, nor write a single line of explanation. An imperious prudence that could no longer be defied, absolutely forbade all intercourse between them, or even explanation on the subject of the domestic disunion, till the arrival of her mother; and on her maternal interference she now rested, as on a certain resource, should no intervening circumstance render it unnecessary. Yet that intervening circumstances would render it so, she hardly doubted. A short repose, and that renovation of spirits which morning produces, had again invigorated her hopes and her resentment. Many long hours were now before her. Mr. Seymour would, she assured herself, have had leisure to weigh the injustice of his suspicions, nor could it be possible she believed that he should permit the day to pass without some effort on his part, either
of

of kindness or resentment. It is not often that minds themselves suffering under irritation are aware how little leisure the same sensation leaves in the mind of others either for action or for thought. The long day *did* pass : Mr. Seymour neither came, nor sent ; and his wife experienced the heart-sickening pain of hope deferred.

The day that proved so tedious to her, was spent by the two persons who chiefly engaged her recollection in a manner wholly new and unexpected by either. Repugnant as it was to the feelings of Mr. Villars again to enter a house of which she was no longer the inhabitant, he knew no adequate cause to assign for abruptly dismissing himself from that of Mr. Seymour. The occurrence of the night before demanded to be allowed for, in a husband whose agitated state of mind might reasonably palliate a temporary unkindness : and
if

if not wholly excusable, it was at least far from being of force to cancel the recollection of past hospitality. Yet to Villars, Mr. Seymour, however little external circumstances might have varied, was no longer the same person he had hitherto appeared. He was a husband whose rights he had attempted to invade, a benefactor whose protection he had repaid with ingratitude, an associate, under whose very roof he was to dissemble; and to carry on a secret intercourse that tended eventually to deprive him both of honour and of fortune. Such were his claims and his character in one point of view. In the other he was a treacherous and insidious enemy, who, while he pretended to confer obligation, had been basely violating every tie of equity and feeling. Whether he was to be considered, therefore, as the injured or the injurer, the friend or the oppressor, it was equally adverse to the feelings of Villars

to

to hold much further intercourse with him. Meet however they must. Since to insinuate motives for withdrawing, not authorised by any reasonable evidence, would have been an unjustifiable and irreparable insult: to withdraw without assigning any motive was scarce possible; yet to preserve in thus meeting that middle line of conduct which gratitude, delicacy, and prudence united to prescribe, was perhaps of all measures most difficult to a young man of the character and principles of the one in question.

Nothing could be less expected by Mr. Seymour than the appearance of the person on earth whom he believed he had most reason to hate and to fear. A conjecture so degrading to Villars past across his mind at sight of him, as the latter would ill have endured, had it been possible for him to have surmised it, and which none but a

worldly one could have entertained. In fact Mr. Seymour hardly doubted but that he came prepared with some vindication or plausible tale, invented by Julia and himself, to induce a reconciliation that might extricate both, from the difficulties into which her indiscretion had suddenly plunged them. Neither the countenance of Villars, nor his character, announced anything, however, to support such a suggestion. The former was now collected and sedate; the latter, he well knew, was not of a temperament easily to resolve upon, much less execute so contemptible a species of duplicity; and another surmise then occurred. It was possible that he had himself extended his suspicions too far. Mrs. Seymour and Villars might be innocent; and though the mind of Mr. Seymour was not acutely sensible either to the feelings of tenderness or pride, an emotion of pleasure to which he had for some days been a stranger,

stranger, certainly found place in it at this supposition. The circumstances on which he and his wife had finally differed, now recurred more dispassionately to his imagination. He recollected that Villars, from whatever motive, either of honour or caution, had not absolutely rejected the commission which *he* had proffered him; though with a sort of equivocal conduct, as it then appeared, he had waved all further discussion of the subject, by abruptly leaving the room. Upon his behaviour therefore on the present occasion, and more particularly upon his acceptance or rejection of the appointment at St. Domingo, seemed to rest the evidence that was to ascertain his views. Mr. Seymour had many reasons for temporising with the young man, and none, except those of ungovernable jealousy, for driving him to extremities. It was nevertheless impossible for him so to command his countenance as not to betray symptoms

of secret distrust and displeasure ; but he strove to throw something like cordiality into his manner after the coldness of a first salutation was past ; and without reverting to any circumstance of his domestic history, affected to talk of the regiment in which he meant to place Villars, and to make, in a negligent manner, such a report of it, as should oblige the other to announce his determination. But Villars was no longer to be duped. He saw mystery and distrust in Mr. Seymour, though he wholly mistook the object at which they pointed ; and he began to suspect that the concealment which he had imposed upon himself was already defeated by some previous discovery. Even if that were not the case, he could not but think it a marking confirmation of some sinister design, that, of all countries, St. Domingo should be chosen for his station, and, of all junctures, Mr. Seymour should have fixed upon one when his

own mind must necessarily be distracted with a variety of cares, to interest himself thus warmly in the hopes or the fortune of another. Occupied as both parties were by reflections thus mutually disadvantageous, the conversation could not fail to be cold and languishing between them: Yet neither had the smallest suspicion of the real subject of distrust by which the other was engrossed. Villars, after a conflict of prudence and candour, suffered the former to prevail, and contented himself with declaring that he must decline the appointment tendered him by Mr. Seymour, as it was not his wish at *that juncture* to quit England.

“It is enough, Sir,” replied Seymour, rising indignantly, after having anticipated a decision that thus confirmed his worst fears. “Spare yourself,” he added, “the meanness of further duplicity. I am per-

fectly acquainted with the source of your irresolution, and know how to draw my conclusions from the event."

"Draw your conclusions at least, Sir, from what passes in your own bosom," said Villars with some surprise, and no little resentment at the tone in which he was addressed. "*That* indeed may lead you to suspect the cause of my irresolution—or perhaps," he added after a pause, no longer doubting that Mr. Seymour was apprised of the visitor who had been admitted the night before, though not exactly of the purport of the conversation—"perhaps your servants have given you more ample information?"

"I have taken effectual measures to be informed of every thing that has passed under my roof, Sir, however clandestinely carried on."

"Spare

“Spare them then in future; and receive your intelligence from him who best can give it. The worldly prudence that enjoins my silence I am little practised in, but the dictates of honour are the same in all bosoms. I will, therefore, be explicit.—The information I last night received, Sir, has induced me to write to Atkinson.—This is at present the whole of our *clandestine* correspondence.”

“*Write to Atkinson!*” said Mr. Seymour, changing colour, and faltering at a reply so widely remote from any correspondence to which he had alluded. “And what can Atkinson possibly have to say in the business between us?”

“That I am to learn. Mr. Seymour you and I, as far as discretion is concerned, are far from meeting on equal terms. But as we may seldom meet again, I have

no intention to conceal, in the present explanation, any part of my conduct or sentiments. I wrote to Atkinson, because I believed no man could so well inform me who was the legal claimant to an estate, as one who so long had the management of it."

And now Mr. Seymour changed colour, indeed! that Villars should be apprised of his own rights in life, should calmly, deliberately have taken measures to ascertain them, should decline leaving England avowedly for no other motive but to investigate their truth, were events at once so new and unexpected as to subdue all caution, and defy all dissimulation. Nor, indeed, was Villars himself much less surprised, to perceive that he had, in fact, now first unfolded that mystery to Mr. Seymour, which a jealous pride, and a pre-occupied imagination, had induced him to suppose

suppose that the latter reproached him for concealing. Yet concealment of some sort had certainly been alluded to. Villars, collecting his thoughts, was no longer at a loss to guess its nature; and he felt that Mr. Seymour's reproaches were not the only ones he had to contend with. Rising therefore with an expression of countenance more respectful and self-governed than resentful,

“ If, by a private application to Atkinson, I have shocked either your feelings or your pride, Sir,” said he, “ recollect the peculiar circumstances in which I acted, and believe my assertion, when I solemnly declare that my respect for both, rather than any personal consideration, induced a concealment of my measures. You cannot but know that it is due to myself to ascertain the question of my own rights in life.—Be assured, on the word of a man
of

of honour, that yours—whatever their nature—or extent”—and a conscious glow covered his cheeks as he spoke, “shall never be either contested or violated by me.”

“You dare, then, to suspect me of fraudulent possession?” exclaimed Seymour in great wrath; totally forgetting, in this coarse expression of jealousy for his fortune, that which he had before entertained of his wife; and as utterly insensible to the humiliation which Villars had imposed upon himself in his indirect concession.

“It is difficult to determine what a man *dare* do!—I have no answer Sir, for a question so put,” replied Villars.

“Presuming and ungrateful! I suppose you know that you are in my power, Sir.”

“A bad

“ A bad argument to dissuade me from getting out of it.—Mr. Seymour, one of us will owe the other a great reparation. It *may* be my part to offer it. You have *possibly* been a generous friend—be a generous enemy, therefore, and spare me, for the present, an altercation extremely trying to my feelings. Allow me to thank you for your hospitality, for your protection, for all the numberless benefits by which I have hitherto conceived myself bound to you, and to profess, that whatever may be the event of my present inquiry, I neither desire, nor will receive, any future ones. Whether my acknowledgments for the past are a debt or a reproach, time will decide; in the interim I leave the question to be settled within your own bosom:—I must apply to some less partial casuist:”—he bowed and took his leave.

Dinner

Dinner was announced to Mr. Seymour soon after the departure of Villars, but his conference with the latter had entirely spoiled his appetite, and it was removed almost untouched; an accident that rarely happened. In truth the whole circle of St. James's hardly perhaps afforded a personage more truly disconsolate than he at that moment discovered himself to be. His former suspicions had returned with additional force and acuteness, in proportion as he began to believe that the plot against him lay deeper than he had hitherto supposed. He was convinced that he had lost his wife; he entertained very well-founded apprehensions of losing his estate; and he already, in imagination, saw his town-house, with all its elegant embellishments, under the hammer of the auctioneer. After a very disagreeable contemplation of some hours upon these various

various particulars, he ordered his house-keeper to send him a bason of water-gruel, and retired to his apartment ; where, while laying aside his Brutus wig, in order to tuck on his night-cap, he did not indeed make precisely the same reflection with the disappointed and celebrated hero whose name is thus disgraced, “that virtue was a shadow ;” but he so far resembled him, as to suspect that the great object of his own life would turn out to be nothing better : in other words, that fashionable celebrity would prove at sixty, a very inadequate substitute for a good name, a good conscience,—or even for a moderately good wife.

Nor were the reflections of Villars very satisfactory. He had not been able, throughout his conference with Mr. Seymour, to feel the proud consciousness of
an

an unfulfilled mind, nor to utter, with an unfettered tongue, the expressions of manly indignation, since sensible that he had himself resisted temptation very little better than Seymour had done: nor when he considered their different periods of life, did he stand much higher in his own good opinion, because to him the temptation had been of a different nature. The mental degradation this recollection brought with it, was of all evils that which Villars was least prepared to encounter, and calculated to feel with most poignancy. The experience of a very few months had, indeed, as is often the case, rendered him both wise and miserable. It had proved, what all the moralists he had read, never so feelingly convinced him of; that man is indeed a creature great in theory, but feeble and defective in practice: and that he who qualifies with any passion which

it is vicious to indulge, will eventually be disposed to run the hazard of every ill consequence that may result from it.

Mr. Seymour, the next day, persuaded himself that he was desperately ill. He shut his doors, sent for his apothecary, and passed the interval between the morning and evening visit of this gentleman, in considering what counsel he should advise with, of most ingenuity and least conscience, successfully to litigate a bad cause.

But while Mr. Seymour was thus indulging the maladies of his distempered imagination, rather than frame, his lovely, though indiscreet wife, was suffering real and severe indisposition. From the hour that she left her husband's house, she had hardly tasted food, in spite of every effort she made to attempt doing so. Sleep
had

had utterly deserted her. Unable longer to support the inaction to which she had condemned her own heart, on the evening of the third day she wrote to him. Had her letter been received at an earlier period, it might possibly have produced the effects she expected from it: but Mr. Seymour was now thinking of his own griefs, and his own sufferings. The terms in which she mentioned Villars, whose fate and fortune she conceived to be in his hands, however cautiously guarded, kindled again all his irritable feelings. Another wound also lay festering at his heart, of which his wife was not aware: it was the look she had cast upon him when they parted. In domestic dissension any thing may be forgiven rather than scorn: other tokens of resentment are but common arrows; *that* is a poisoned shaft, and hardly ever ceases to rankle where once it has penetrated. Mr. Seymour could not pardon it. He
contented

contented himself therefore with signifying, by a short note, in answer to hers, that he willingly deferred all further discussion of differences till the arrival of Mrs. Cleveland : but he could not command his temper so far as to forbear adding, that the man in whose fate she shewed so *generous an interest*, was occupied by plans tending to impoverish her husband, and make a beggar of her child, if beggary on his own part did not prevent him.

Mrs. Cleveland arrived within four-and-twenty hours after the receipt of this note, and found her daughter very alarmingly ill. She had had a succession of fainting fits, and was reduced to a state of weakness that left her exposed to the utmost danger, should the premature event take place, which was hourly expected. It was too late to remove her to her own house, had Mr. Seymour acceded to the overture for

fo doing; he neither granted nor refused it, however, but maintained a fullen silence.

The cruel, the distracting intelligence of Julia's danger at length reached the ear of Villars. He had in the interim received a very satisfactory letter from Atkinson. The collateral degree of consanguinity on which the claims both of Mr. Seymour and himself were founded, did not indeed appear so close in the person of either, as his informant had reported it to be, but his own title seemed to have evidently the advantage over that of his competitor: he had therefore laid the question before counsel, who returned an unequivocal opinion in his favour. But what were claims, what was fortune to him, in the state of his mind at that crisis! The whole world would have seemed valueless if put in competition with the hope of securing

securing health or safety to Mrs. Seymour. He found it impossible to live from her door; nor did Mrs. Cleveland refuse to see him. Matilda was also present. He started at sight of the latter: it was her lovely sister, in the bloom of eighteen, that seemed to stand before him: but it was not Julia herself, and he quickly forgot her: Mrs. Cleveland, whose interest and curiosity were both strongly excited by the particular circumstances in which he stood to her family, wrung from him by interrogation, a confused account of what had passed between Mr. Seymour and himself. On her part she confirmed his worst fears with regard to her daughter; and he left the house in a state of distraction, to which the event that succeeded his return to his lodgings could hardly add. He found there a person to whom he was indebted for various expensive though necessary articles, which had been furnished for his

intended voyage to India. He had no means to discharge the demand, nor power or patience to write to Mr. Seymour on the subject, and was therefore obliged to dismiss the demander as he could. A second visitor, upon a business of the same nature, easily led him to comprehend that Mr. Seymour was in fact the man who thus indirectly threatened his personal liberty. Heart-rending chagrin constrained him therefore to address a few lines to the former, desiring an account of his small patrimonial fortune: but of this note Mr. Seymour, with most ungentlemanly insolence, took no notice. Villars knew himself to be under age, but his appearance did not denote this; it therefore remained to be proved; and what should, in the interim, secure him from the insults of a rich and powerful oppressor, who had plunged too deeply in injustice not to persevere? A prison—a grave would have been alike
indifferent

indifferent to Villars, but that Julia yet lived; and while she lived, to wander round the walls that inclosed her, seemed necessary to his own existence.

Mrs. Seymour at length brought into the world a lovely boy; two months, however, before the time: but her strength was wholly exhausted, and little hope remained that it could ever be restored. Mr. Seymour himself was now roused to some tokens of sensibility: he did not indeed see either mother or child; the mother it was not thought prudent should see him; but he spared no demonstrations of respect to Mrs. Cleveland or Matilda; and the indiscreet and immoderate affliction of the former, whose weak character time had not corrected, soon betrayed to Mrs. Seymour that danger which her medical attendants had carefully concealed.

Amid the great circle of human events death had not presented itself to the imagination of Julia : none indeed, according to their natural course, appeared less probable. She was in the very flower of life ; had been, only a single fortnight before, in the perfection of health ; nor could danger, in fact, have approached her but through the medium of indiscretion or accident. She had herself struck the blow, and she began to perceive that it would prove mortal. She perceived it with all the anguish of a young and unsubdued mind. Life was inexpressibly dear to her : her sense of pleasure was not withered ; her heart was yet alive to a thousand tender and delightful hopes. It was indeed acquainted with suffering ; but it had not passed through those melancholy gradations of disappointment and languor which palsify the feelings, and make all around joyless and vapid.

After

After drawing from the exclamations and tears of her feeble-minded mother, such conclusions as left her no doubt with regard to the danger of her own case, she earnestly requested Mrs. Cleveland and Matilda to withdraw ; and amid the silence of a sick chamber, alone with God and her conscience, she now communed with both. The world no longer wore the same aspect to her that it had hitherto done. She saw it as a sphere of honourable and useful action, where every individual touched some point of moral obligation, of which that of example prest most closely upon the great or the affluent. Hers had the negative merit of having never encouraged vice ; but it had lent to frivolity, levity, and dissipation, graces that might well have supported a better cause. Nor did her behaviour as a wife any longer appear to her wholly irreproachable : for she felt, that in ascribing to her own cha-

rafter and influence in society, a superiority over those of Mr. Seymour, the least duty she imposed upon her heart, was that of rising as much above him in conduct, as in self-opinion.——She had failed in the trial, and it would probably be never more repeated. Yet she ventured to present to Heaven a mind sullied indeed, but untainted: one that had withstood the temptation to much evil, and had been disposed to much good.——Heaven accepted the offering; for a soft and religious hope tranquillised her feelings, and restored an equanimity which enabled her to consider, with calmness, what yet remained to do in life.

She was worse the next day, and on that which succeeded, her case was pronounced to be desperate. Having extorted from those around, a tacit acknowledgment of this truth, she requested that such medicines

cines might be administered, as would supply her with temporary strength and spirits, and her mother, by her desire, sent for Mr. Villars. She also signified it to be her wish, as the last act of her life, to see Mr. Seymour.

Villars, on arriving, was received by Mrs. Cleveland in the ante-room: nor had he, for a considerable time, either power or self-command enough to proceed further. The door of communication stood open, and the feeble light of a close-shaded lamp shewed him the inner apartment. Mrs. Seymour lay on the bed, the curtains of which were only half drawn, and the folds of her long wrapper slightly marked her still graceful and elegant person.

"Is it you, dear Villars?" said she, hearing the low murmur of an anguish which it was impossible he should suppress.—

"Draw

“ Draw near, and let me speak to you.”

—The unfortunate young man dropt in agonizing sorrow on his knee while receiving the hand which she feebly lifted to him.

“ Controul yourself,” said she :—“ Subdue this ungoverned sensibility, and hear me with calmness—if you ever mean to hear me more.—I am approaching a sad crisis, and you are among the very few in this world to whom I still wish to address myself :—but your excessive emotion overpowers—it enfeebles me !”—and she made a long pause.—“ Yet, however painful the effort, I must speak, both to console you, and to acquit myself.—Do not believe, my dear Charles, that in this last, painful meeting, you are bidding an eternal adieu to a fond and devoted heart ;—such as yours seeks and deserves. Fluctuating sensibility—ill-judged levity on my
part,

part, and an unkindness perhaps still more ill-judged on the part of another, have, I well know, contributed to cherish this dangerous illusion. But nature, dear Villars, had placed disparity between us : a premature knowledge of life made me even older than my years : and from the moment when the vehemence of your attachment obliged me to ascertain the nature of my own, I solemnly declare myself to have felt for you only that fond and tender interest which a mother might have cherished for a beloved son.—That it was—*nay is*, most tender I will not deny. It taught me to grieve for your misfortunes, to palliate your faults, to suffer in your sufferings, but never to desire the exclusive possession of your heart.—It *will* teach me,” and she feebly prest his hand, “ if in another world I am sensible to any thing in that I leave behind me, still to share every honourable pursuit

purfuit in which you may hereafter be engaged. We muft part—and affuredly never *here* to meet again. But I give you one folemn—dying injunction ;”——and again ſhe made a long pause both for breath and voice.—“ Remember that you have injured Mr. Seymour. Had your influence kept pace with your wifhes, you would, indeed, moft effentially have injured him. Let that recollection make an eternal claim on your forbearance.—At this folemn moment, when his errors no longer palliate mine, I too can pardon—can feel for him. It may now alas, be his turn to fuffer !—One thing—and only one more.—I leave behind me,”——and ſhe melted into tears—“ a helpless and innocent child.—I am told that by ſome ſtrange chance of circumſtances, you, of all created beings, are the very one by whoſe claims it may be impoverished.”——

“ Never !”

“Never!” exclaimed Villars, starting up for a moment : then eagerly resuming his first posture, “Angel of light!” he added, “listen to me, while I solemnly imprecate every curse of misery or want on my own head, should any earthly motive ever induce me to litigate the inheritance of a child of yours!”——Mrs. Seymour’s lips and eyelids suddenly shivered, and her hand became colder.——Villars was obliged to leave the room.

He retired to an apartment below in a state of mind that unfitted him to judge either of time or place. He had been long there, when Matilda at length entered. She came by the desire of her sister, who had not been able to prevail on Mrs. Cleveland to leave her, in order to inquire after, to console, and to request him to depart. But he was past all consolation, even that of the sweet creature who offered it in its best,
indeed

indeed its only form—sympathy: he at length controled himself so far, however, as to quit her with some small appearance of self-possession. In the hall he was accosted by Mrs. Seymour's maid; she had a cloak on, and he with difficulty understood that as it was nearly dark, she desired protection. Without being able to ask, or answer a single question, he suffered her to take his arm. She walked with him, by a way of her own chusing, to the door of his lodgings, and even followed him to that of his apartment. Villars, on turning round to shut it, looked at her in silence.

“ I beg your pardon, Sir,” said she; “ you think me very odd—perhaps very bold—but indeed I am ordered not to leave you without warning you to take care of yourself.” Villars shook his head impatiently, and motioned with his hand that she should withdraw.

“ I must

" I must not go—indeed I must not, Sir, till I have given notice—that—that we suspect there are some very bad men looking out for you.—So Mrs. Cleveland and Miss Matilda, Sir,—they were afraid—afraid——"

" Of what?"

" The men were waiting, Sir, somewhere near our street. So Miss Matilda was very unhappy indeed; but she said that perhaps if two people went out together, and especially if one of them was a woman, they would not guess the other to be you."

" Who are the men?" said Villars, at length finding power to articulate.

" I can't say I know their names, Sir—but our William was the first to find them
out,

out, and he tells us that he is sure they are bailiffs,—and Miss Matilda did so cry at hearing it! for she says that it would be my poor Lady's death-stroke at once, if she could but suspect that my master was capable of such a wicked action."

"It is complete!" said Villars: and for a moment he walked up and down the room.—"Your Ladies are very kind—and you are very kind. Say that I will endeavour to set some value on my safety, since they interest themselves in it.—Oh Julia," he internally exclaimed, "how immeasurably great will be the virtue of forbearance!"

On the following morning he received a note from Mrs. Cleveland. It contained a positive injunction to him not again to present himself at Mrs. Seymour's door, as it was utterly impossible that any person should

should be admitted there. Her husband was on that day to be with her.

To Mr. Seymour, a death-bed was at all times a fearful and appalling thought. But the death-bed of Julia—of that creature who, within a period so short that it seemed but as yesterday, had been bestowed upon him in all the lustre of beauty and health—to approach *that* bed, was a suffering that nearly expiated his offences, and those of the weak mother who had united so to mismatch her.—The parting between them was solemn and impressive. He made no answer to the representations which she conceived herself bound by conscience to offer in favour of Villars, but he received and admitted a religious attestation of her unshaken fidelity to him, and he consented to take home the child.

On the following day Villars received another note from Mrs. Cleveland—and it was sealed with *black* wax.

* * * *

To the period of time that immediately succeeded, Mr. Villars was very little sensible. Julia gone!—eternally gone!—that fair vision vanished!—the whose image so long had gilded his anxious days!—his restless nights!—first and only object of his life, while life itself was yet new to him!—hardly could his imagination credit the idea!—much less dismiss from it, the feeble light—the melancholy chamber, and all the dreadful ceremony of the last agonising farewell.

“ Oh that her voice, tho’ low as then it seem’d,
Could reach me now !”

groaned Villars a thousand times a-day.

He

* * * *

He was at length roused from anguish to a transient sense of gratitude by the unremitting attentions and kindness of Mrs. Cleveland and Matilda. His health had suffered very materially under the conflicts of his mind, and as they were on the point of setting out for Devonshire, they earnestly, and perseveringly, insisted on his promising to visit them there. Whatever might be the dictates of discretion, those of tenderness for her lost daughter, and even of gratitude to Villars superseded them in Mrs. Cleveland's mind, and both had a powerful auxiliary in the person of Matilda: for she, as well as her mother, saw or fancied they saw, a more than common degree of generosity in the total renunciation of his claims. The future line of con-

duct that Mr. Seymour intended to pursue, remained doubtful ; but it appeared that he had, for the time at least, withdrawn his persecution. Villars, therefore, set out on foot, a friendless wanderer to go he knew not whither ; leaving a power with his solicitor to rescue the little which he now deemed his sole possession in life, from the grasp of Mr. Seymour. But he left also a positive injunction to reject all compromise, all resignation of his own rights, and all overtures whatever from the latter, that tended to establish intercourse between them. It was for the child of Julia, and only for her child, that he consented to be friendless and impoverished.

While art exhausts herself in vain and fruitless efforts, nature has sometimes influence enough to staunch the wounds of the heart. Those breezes that invigorate the frame, penetrate with balmy influence

to the soul. Nothing could, perhaps, be more soothing in the actual state of Mr. Villars's mind, than to wander alone through the solitudes of a beautiful country, to catch nature in her wild, yet fairest forms; to hold converse with the dead, "and entertain their spirits in his desolate bosom."

After passing many weeks in this manner he at length approached the retired residence of Mrs. Cleveland. Here, the tangled wood-walks and wilds copses that must once have been the haunt of her lovely daughter, became doubly interesting to him. After much irresolution, and many a conflict, he at length presented himself at Mrs. Cleveland's door. Matilda was the first to recognize—the first to hear his voice, and to welcome him. Even her mother received him as one who had a claim to her hospitality; and the obscure, houseless traveller seemed in their society

to have found that sweet home which fortune had hitherto denied him. No mention was made of Mr. Seymour ; but the babe, so dearly purchased on one side, so dearly endowed on the other, was well.

Mr. Villars past several days that were never to be forgotten by him, in this retreat. He then quitted it, and striking directly towards the sea, pursued all the irregularities of the coast for many miles ; still indulging himself by keeping in view that element whose restless motion seemed most congenial to his frame of mind. Summer was far advanced when he reached Weymouth. Here, a feverish indisposition that had been gaining ground fast upon him when in London, and which continual change of air had subdued, returned with fresh force, and obliged him to remain stationary. He had been there more than three weeks when, in the course of a solitary

litary ramble, he cast his eyes upon a face which he immediately recognised : it was that of Mrs. Seymour's maid. She held in her arms a fair and delicate child, whose black sash announced its irreparable loss. Villars felt himself now bound to remain at Weymouth by a tie far stronger than any malady but that of the heart could impose. The woman knew him well : she permitted him sometimes to caress the lovely baby, and from her he learnt that Mr. Seymour was himself on the coast for the benefit of his health, which had suffered considerably since the death of his wife. The shock that had occasioned to his nerves had, indeed, never been wholly recovered by him. He was of an age when the sufferings of the imagination easily pass into the frame, and was indeed seriously, though not apparently very ill. Villars caught a glance of him one day upon the beach, but retreated from the view as from that of a basilisk.

Mr. Seymour did not hope to receive much benefit from his residence at Weymouth ; but his own house had been a desert to him, since the gay world, and she who was once the gayest of the gay, were no longer to be seen there. He staid therefore rather because he did not like to go, than for any other reason. The close of the season carried him at length away. Villars saw him drive from the town, and nearly on the same day received letters from the solicitor to whom he had entrusted his concerns, to inform him that Mr. Seymour under the pretext of his not being of age, evaded giving up his patrimony into his own hands, except upon certain conditions which he had good reason to expect would not be complied with. The letter also contained a caution to him to attend to his personal security, as there was reason to believe that Mr. Seymour, alarmed by the demand lately made, which he conceived to be the forerunner of other measures,

would, as a desperate effort, employ every engine, however unjust, to reduce him to terms.

The event of this application seemed conclusive. Villars, too indigent to plunge deeper in law, was wholly without redress, nay, almost without present resource. The apartments which he inhabited were too expensive, and made him too obvious to notice, to suit either his finances or his apprehensions, and he removed——

“*Where* did he remove to?” said Atkinson, frantic with impatience at seeing the break : for as the initials by which the story had been marked, had not to him disguised the names of the different parties, he had, at sight of his own, eagerly turned to the last page of the book, for the very intelligence that there failed him.

“ Where

"Where did *who* remove?" said Mrs. Dixon.

"Mr. Villars,—my young master, Mr. Villars."

"Why, fure you are dreaming! The name of Villars is not in the book."

"But it is in my heart. Where is he, Mrs. Dixon?"

"Who do you come from?"—

"From Mr. Seymour."

"Then I shall tell you nothing at all of the matter. I have read more of the book than Mr. Villars believes. Mr. Seymour is a wicked man, and I don't desire to hear another word about him."

"But

“ But he is a dying man, and he can't die in peace till he does justice.—I tell you that my business is a blessed one: it is to restore Mr. Villars his estate.”

“ And why did you not say at first that you came upon a good errand?”

“ What could possibly make you think that I should come on any other?”

“ Bless my soul, Sir, I took you for a lawyer.”

“ Why then, Mrs. Dixon, learn to correct your prejudices; and to think that a lawyer may do a kind action sometimes, as well as another man.—I tell you that Mr. Villars is heir to five thousand a year.”

“ Then I tell you, in return, that the heir to five thousand a year is at this moment

ment shut up in my back attic,—and has been so, these six weeks.—Are you sure of what you say?”

“ I will swear it,” said Atkinson, taking up the book.

“ It is not a Bible, but it will do!” replied Mrs. Dixon.—“ We must not hurry poor dear Mr. Villars though, for he is not well.” So, because she would not hurry him, she ran breathless up the stairs, and, after two gentle but very hasty raps, threw open the door. Villars was reading. The appearance of health had indeed faded from his manly cheeks, but both his countenance and person were highly prepossessing.

“ Here is Mr. Atkinson, Sir,” cried Mrs. Dixon, speaking fast and thick. “ Your friend, Mr. Atkinson.” They looked

looked earnestly at each other, but recognition was impossible. Atkinson, however, quickly made himself known; and informed Villars, that Mr. Seymour, whose case was considered as hopeless, had employed every measure to discover his residence. Measures which were constantly defeated, from being imputed to very opposite motives to those which now influenced him. The child had rejoined its mother. It had ever been a delicate infant, and its death had been a mortal stroke to Mr. Seymour, both as to his feelings and temporal views. Since, besides being passionately fond of it, the debilitated state of his nerves induced him to consider the loss as a visitation. He now earnestly desired to see Villars, and had invested Atkinson with powers to make over the title deeds of the estate to him, on the instant of his own decease.

Mr.

Mr. Seymour lay sick at his house in town; but Villars found himself utterly unable to subdue his feelings so far as to enter that house, even though the refusal were to be attended with the worst consequences to himself. All there was Julia's, —in *his* eyes, Julia's only. Though it was now six months since the world had lost her, to him she still lived; and the spot in which she had presided, which she had embellished, it was impossible for him again to behold. Another Julia indeed, in form and outward semblance, perhaps also in character, one deeply endeared to his heart, and to whom he was secretly most dear, was to be found there; but it was not the enchantress whom he had so passionately loved; nor could he resolve, in those circumstances, to see even Matilda again. She, with her mother, had come up at the request of Mr. Seymour, to console and watch over the latter.

The

The contending feelings of Mr. Villars's mind, caused him to be an invalid himself immediately on his arrival, and during that period Mr. Seymour, by finishing his career in this world, left his competitor a brilliant fortune, of which, through the good offices of Atkinson, he took unmolested and immediate possession.

Time, occupation, and circumstances, at length succeeded in consoling Mr. Villars. But not till he had atoned for the weakness and romantic indiscretion of his early conduct by long and bitter regret. He was then permitted to indulge the overflowings of a heart still too tender and retired for the common intercourse of society, in the tranquil happiness of domestic life, and to cherish, in a fond and lasting attachment to Mrs. Villars, his love both for *Julia and Matilda*.

And

And what became of the counterparts?
 Why, they had at length been fortunate
 enough to discover each other: a good for-
 tune that does not attend all the counter-
 parts of this world. In consequence of
 which they agreed to make their little
 establishment in the friendly neighbour-
 hood of Mr. Villars, and to have for the
 future only one fireside in common.

THE END.



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